

# Getting Around the Place

*A Primer of Anglican Worship and Practice (with a bit of theology thrown in on the side).*



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## Introduction

From architecture to music, Anglican worship is intentional about everything it does. Nothing is independent, all is co-dependent and folded into the common whole for the sole purpose of worshiping God and experiencing his presence with us.

Many churches highlight a single portion of their service above another (i.e., the sermon is the pinnacle of the service, or the music, or the presentation, etc.). Not so with us. From beginning to end our service is meant to maintain one glorious plateau - a place where music, prayers, communion, and everything else that happens in the service is leveled out, without highs and lows. Another way to say this is that the service speaks for itself, and is independent of the quality of the music, the relevance of the sermon, or any one particular component of our time together.

This “work” (i.e., liturgy) is not always the easiest, nor the most entertaining. But at the end of the day the worshippers walk away knowing they have heard the Word, affirmed their belief in Christ, prayed, received forgiveness, and received the sacrament. At the end of the day, the worshiper - having been refreshed and renewed in the Word and Sacrament, is empowered to go back into the world to continue the work of the Great Commission.

In the chapters that follow we’ll take a look at a brief history of Anglicanism - but more so let’s look at what happens (and why) on a typical Sunday morning. You’ll hear terms like liturgy, progression, sacrament, robes, and three streams. Hopefully you will be able to enter Andover Community Church to worship and serve the Lord in a way you never have before!

# **PART I**

## **AT A GLANCE**

# Chapter I

## Planet Anglican

Let's talk first impressions.

Anglican services can appear quite boring, rote, or just plain strange. It doesn't take long to realize this isn't a leader-centered worship experience. It's something we all take part in. This communal activity is called "liturgy," which is defined in itself as the work of the people.

People stand, people kneel. They flap their hands around in the air. They bow, sing, and pray out loud. Everyone is invited to participate, even kids.

We have priests in robes, guitars behind microphones, candles on the table, and "altar calls" to receive Jesus. We sing in tongues, from hymnals, and words on the screen. We have unique ways to tell time through church seasons, varied liturgies, and rotating colors. We also have strange names for leadership positions like rector, deacon, warden, vestry, and sexton.

Most "outsiders" don't have a place in their brain for how we do church. They look around, shrug their shoulders, and leave to never return. Perhaps they think what we do has no relevance. To them it may seem like old archaic stuff that is out of touch with the world.

This presents an interesting challenge to leadership. We seek to speak into today's culture, yet we strive to keep the integrity of the tradition as well. We are a "three-streamed" church (a phrase we'll explore later) with an intent to maintain a style of doing church that has been going strong from the day the church was formed. Yet we live in the future. Before we get to the specifics, let's look at the challenge of "doing modern church with an ancient identity."

Part of our challenge is to create a worship space in a way that honors the time-held tradition of the ages, while staying in tune with the culture around us.

The church is not like any other business, club, community, or social gathering in this world. It is a collection of people who have been called out of the world, into his marvelous light, to proclaim the praises of Jesus. We are unique. The Bible calls us saints. We are a foreign tribe, a peculiar people, resident aliens who love and serve God through ancient ways handed down from Abraham, Moses, and Jacob. On the other hand, we are called to serve our culture through contextual relevance, sharing ancient ways in future languages, styles, and settings.

Some churches, in an effort to be "seeker-friendly," have throttled back their Christian to such an extent that they are hardly distinguishable from the world. They look like, smell like, talk like, dress like, and behave exactly like any other gathering in the world. But this creates an interesting question: How can the ancient church stay relevant in modern society without losing its identity? Is there a chance that church gatherings can bend so much to the culture that they no longer can be recognized as the Body of Christ?

When does music, for example, cease to be ministry and morph into entertainment? Or, when does the Gospel message - for fear of offending others - get so watered down that we avoid words like "sin," or "hell"? Without intent to stay the course we too may slide down that slippery slope (intentionally or unintentionally) and slow-boil the frog without even realizing it.

These questions will be tied in together as we read. For now the question is not, "How do we do church", but, "Who is the church"?

## Church

To say, "We go to church," isn't quite right. To say, "We are the church" is a bit closer to the truth. The Bible calls us the ekklesia - those the "called out," people who, through the ages, have been marked as his own and do life within the teachings of Jesus. The church is not a building (though we have been called, "temple"), but a glorious company of souls (past, present, and future). We are an assembly of people, not a clump of bricks.

The apostle Peter writes:

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. (1 Peter 2:9)

Let these words sink in. This is an excellent description of who the church is: chosen as royal and holy, relationally connected to one another with a corporate identity - identified as God's own treasure - who has chosen to share relationship with us and to proclaim his Life to everyone around us.

There are other descriptions that define the church as well:

- ✦ Eternal Body. We are an organic body of believers that are all connected across time and space (heaven and earth; past, present, and future), with Christ at the head.
- ✦ Temple. We are a community of people wherein the Holy Spirit tabernacles with us. Within our gatherings are sacrifices of praise, worship, prayer. The very atmosphere of heaven is disclosed each time we gather.
- ✦ Hospital. One by-product of being in the atmosphere of heaven is healing, restoration, forgiveness, deliverance, and salvation. We don't wait for people to get it together until they are "good enough," "healed enough," or "sinless enough." We invite them in as Jesus did - just as they are. We know that being together in the Presence of Christ is healing in itself.
- ✦ Embassy. As a nation's embassy in a foreign country reflects the culture, language, and even music of the Mother Country, so too is heaven reflected in the atmosphere of the church. Each church is a postage stamp of a far greater land, the promise of heaven.
- ✦ Missionary Community. Much of what we do happens outside the walls of our church. For example, as we bring the church into the community, it is only then when we realize God's love and compassion to "the least of these." This is a challenging paradigm, as it forces us to change our way of thinking to what "church" is and where it's done.
- ✦ Outpost. Finally, the community of saints can be considered a bunker for the ongoing expansion of the Kingdom of God. This is an offensive posturing and has everything to do with the Great Commission, Jesus' commandment to spread the Good News to every tribe, race, and country on the planet.

Like all cultures, there are traditions, norms, ways of doing things that are peculiar to the particular communities. In addition, languages, dialects, food, and even dress that identify them from others (who are sometimes living in the same town). Some wear t-shirts with logos, others wear uniforms for the service, others have a common type of music that

binds them. Each significant community has something that totally identifies them and distinguishes them from the rest of the crowd.

The church is no different.

Reflections:

- ◆ What were your first impressions when you walked into the church? What did you notice? What surprised you? What turned you off?
  
- ◆ Which of the definitions of "church" resonates with you most at this season of your life? Why?

## Chapter II

### The Stuff that Makes Us Unique

In this chapter we'll look at a few blaring things - good things - but all the same blaring that makes us unique.

#### Liturgy

It has been said there is nothing more deadly than rote liturgy - dry words on a page that people have been reciting for centuries - and nothing more radiant than living liturgy - liturgy infused with the vitality of the Spirit, sensitive, flexible, and an avenue of the disclosed Presence of God.

We hear this word liturgy all the time. But what exactly does it mean?

Liturgy in itself is an ageless approach to worshipping God. Since the dawn of time liturgy has been happening. In its rawest form, liturgy can be described as the framework wherein temple activities happen. The word, "liturgy" itself actually means work - the work of the people, and their intentional participation through the service as they worship God.

Some churches are focused around an anointed pastor, a stellar music program, or a really hip youth minister. Slick marketing itself may be "sexy" enough to grow a church. Yet here, in our liturgical tradition, we - the people - are the heroes of the service, all of us, as one unified Body.

The framework of our work is the Prayer Book (the red book in our pews). This provides liturgies for just about everything we would ever do when we gather. The order for baptisms, confirmations, weddings, ordinations, funerals and right on down the line are all "framed" out in our prayer books.

Within our liturgical structure, those of us who are ordained clergy (i.e. deacons, priests, and bishops) have been appointed to lead liturgy. They are the ones who maintain the pace on Sundays. Our roles are public, other roles, like lay ministry, may not be as public. But all have a role to play. In most Anglican churches, clergy have a Master's of Divinity, a three year course (in addition to their undergraduate degree) training them in everything from church history to ethics to Scriptures and to how to baptize people. While we may look different (white colors, vestments, and stoles), we consider ourselves servants of the church, equipper of the saints, and on equal status with everyone else in the church with our God.

That being said, let's take a look at the outward garments of our clergy, what they are called, and what they represent.

#### Vestments, Robes, and Stoles

The leaders of the service usually wear garbs that are different from everyone else in the room. This doesn't mean they are any holier than anyone else in the room, only that they have been trained and given authority to lead others in worship. We call them the "clergy."

Special clergy-wear has been in practice since the tabernacle of Moses. Priests have always been set apart, or consecrated, to be uniquely equipped to carry on the worship of the community. They came equipped with robes, turbans, miters, outer garments, inner garments, and other decorative fashions. Leadership grew out of the temple ethos, through early synagogue practice, and comes right up from the early church into our day and age.

Churches, too, have become lavishly ornamented (especially in the East). There are arguments saying that churches, robes, vestments, chalices, and the like shouldn't be so ornate, but judging from descriptions of the Tabernacles of Moses and David, and Herod's Temple that wasn't an issue back then. The big theme here is the essential reflection of the glory of the true tabernacle, in heaven. When one takes a closer look at the architecture of ancient and modern buildings great symbolism is woven into the very fabric of their design. Many cathedrals, for example, when peered down upon from above (like a drone) are "cruciform" in structure, meaning that, from the air, they look like a cross.

A typical Sunday service includes some form of formal clergy leadership. Priest(s), deacons, and others are pretty distinguishable in that they are wearing vestments. Vestments have developed over the centuries from the ordinary garments of the Roman world, when the church really got off the ground in an official way. While the culture has changed in our day, the fashion of the institutional church has pretty much remained the same.

Everything we do, pray, sing, and even wear is quite intentional. Nothing is by accident. Let's look at the items most clergy wear and their symbolism.

- ✦ Alb. The alb is a white robe. It comes from a Latin word meaning white thing, from where we get the word albino from. The alb is originally derived from the commonest undergarment in classical Italy, the tunic, and speaks of the white robes worn by the faithful in Revelation. Like most symbols and acts of worship, there can be many meanings. For example, albs also symbolize the waters of baptism, where we are cleansed from sin, or a reminder we are washed in the Blood of the Lamb. Albs may also point to the righteousness of the saints that Jesus imparts to his own.
- ✦ Stole. A stole is a scarf-like piece of material that drapes around the neck of the clergy person and runs to the feet. Stoles in Christian worship have been worn since at least the fourth century. Many stoles are colored with the colors of the church season (red, green, purple, blue, and white). They can be very creative and serve as a symbol of authority for the priest to his or her people. Stoles are similar to yokes, thus they remind the ordained person that he or she is yoked to Christ, and that the burden of shepherding sheep is a great responsibility, and a gentle reminder the sheep under his or her care are really under the care of our Great Shepherd, Jesus. The stole also is likened to a towel. When Jesus told his disciples to wash one another's feet he used a towel. We are called to serve as Jesus served. That is one reason why in a church procession, clergy are always the last to walk down the aisle, followed by their bishop, as a picture of what it means to be the "least of these."
- ✦ Cincture. The cincture is a final article of clothing you'll see on any given Sunday (at our place). This is a rope, stranded around the waist of the clergy person. The cincture girds the alb into place and reminds one of the belt of truth by which we lead God's people and speak his words.

There are other forms of clergy-fashion as well. come and go in various services and ceremonies. The Bishop, for example, carries a shepherd's staff (as a shepherd of shepherds), wears a red hat, called a miter, which points upwards to heaven and speaks of the power from Pentecost to minister in Spirit, and other garments. Additionally, in "higher churches," churches that are more ornate in their expression of worship the celebrant may wear a chasuble (an outer piece of fabric) to preside over the Eucharist.

The worship culture of any given congregation may change dramatically from one church to the next. Some churches have bells and incense, others guitars and pipe organs. One thing we all have in common is our sense of being participatory within the service. We are not in church to sit and be entertained, but to fully participate in the service with our bodies, minds, and souls.



## Let's Get Physical

Many of us tend to separate our spirituality from our bodies. We think our faith is different than our activities - like faith in the invisible thing and has little to do with the stuff we don with our bodies. We express other experiences with physical gestures - hooting at football games, feasting at parties, and hugging relatives, so why not do that at church, too?

People have always used their hands, knees, feet, faces, and various physical postures when adoring their God. Christianity is no different. We raise our hands, kneel, cry, dance, laugh, genuflect, bow, and cross ourselves. Sometimes we are loud, overtimes quiet. Some of us even bow whenever the Name of Jesus is said, signifying our loyalty to his royalty.

Some stand silently, lifting holy hands to the Lord. Still others sit silently, browsing through the pages of Scripture, seeking a word from the Lord, something prophetic, something personal. There is practically no physical posture that can't be used in worship.

We are Biblical worshippers, using our senses, mind, intellect - the whole package as avenues of adoration to bless the Lord, and to understand his Presence among us.

One sign in particular, making the sign of the cross across one's chest, speaks volumes and is worth noting here. People cross themselves at poignant times in liturgy - usually at the end of the creed, during the absolution, and the communion prayers. This simple action speaks loudly and has a multitude of meaning:

- ◆ Ownership. Much like a person may dip their fingers into holy water as they enter the church, making the cross over one's chest reminds them of Whose they are: bought with the precious blood of the Lamb at the cross.
- ◆ Plea for Mercy. To others, a cross is a prayer, a "Amen," during the liturgy.
- ◆ The Gospel. In the crossing of oneself, one actually shares the Good News. Beginning at your head and dropping down to your belly is Jesus coming down to earth from heaven and becoming human. We raise our hand to our left shoulder, which is his ascension back to heaven and, moving across to the right shoulder, is now seated at the right hand of the Father. That one gesture only takes a moment, but it is rich with theology and symbolism. From heaven to earth (forehead to belly), and stone to Throne (shoulder to shoulder is a witness of Christ whenever one makes the sign of the cross.

There are tons of physical movements when we worship. We sit, we stand, we kneel. It can all seem very confusing to the visitor. There is also the added expectation of making sure you get it right, or it may not count. In many Anglican churches the old adage stands: "Kneel for prayer, stand for praise, and sit for instruction." But even then, there are no hard and fast rules. No one will scowl at you for doing the right thing at the wrong time. While it is "common prayer," we don't all need to be expressing adoration to God the same way.

Once, shortly after my conversion, I visited an Episcopal church. I had been raised Episcopalian and now, after understanding a bit more of who it was they were worshiping, I'd thought I'd give it a shot. I screeched into the parking lot and vowed to do all the right things at all the right times. I would kneel on the kneelers when praying, stand up when singing, and sit during the sermon. I remembered most of it from when I was a kid, and now I was going to do everything right like a "real Christian."

The service was going along pretty nicely when I noticed one guy on the front pew doing everything wrong. When we sat, he stood. When we stood, he sat. And during the Prayer of the People, when we should have all been on our knees, I peaked to him standing instead! He was doing everything wrong. I found myself getting quite agitated with this guy.

“He must be new to the church,” I thought. “One day he’ll get it right.”

During the announcements the priest extended a warm welcome to the visitor, which brought a robust round of applause from nearly everyone in the church. As things turned out, the guy who was “doing everything wrong” happened to be Bishop Bill Fry, a major leader in the renewal movement of the church!

I say that to say this: It’s all about adoration to Jesus, coming before him sincerely with open hearts that really sets the standard in our church. Some wouldn’t be caught dead crossing themselves, or genuflecting before the altar. Others can hardly sing a praise chorus without lifting their hands. It’s all good. In our church there is room to express yourself freely, and also room to experiment with other ways as well.

Aside from freedom within the worship service, we enjoy freedoms around what we call the “liturgical calendar” as well. We intentionally bend our scriptures, songs, hearts, into various pockets of our Lord’s life all around the year. In short, we tell time differently than the rest of the world. Within the seasons of the church we express ourselves differently.

## Does Anybody Really Know What Time It is?

Anglicans live season to season, intentionally. Like the rest of mainline denominations, we tell time differently than the secular world. Through any given year we are all about creating sacred space wherein the life of our Lord can be fully, deeply, and richly absorbed.

The church has 6 seasons, 6 segments of time, which we call, “the seasons of the church.” Beginning with the birth of Christ, we follow the life of Jesus through the Gospels right around the calendar, marking his struggles, his miracles, his crucifixion, his ascension, the promise of the Holy Spirit, and the early life of the Messianic Community. Before we know it we’ve encircled the entire year and are again reading, hearing, and singing songs preparing us for the coming of the Promised One again. It’s a wonderful way to do time. Each season of the church comes with its own colors, themes, music, prayers, and liturgies. It really keeps things rolling. Year after year, we become somehow yoked to the life of Jesus and deeply aware of who he was, and who he calls us to be.

The church seasons are Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Ordinary Time. Let’s take a deeper look.

**Advent.** The first season of the church is Advent. It marks the “advent” of a new light in our world. Its colors, blue or purple, remind us that this is a penitential season, a time to remember, to think upon with sobriety, the birth of the Son of God. The lectionary Scriptures call us to consider the hearts of the prophets who exhort their hearers to flatten mountains of pride and raise up the valleys of humility as to recognize the Messiah when he comes.

(Of course we know - from our time in history - Jesus has already been born. Yet, In liturgical time, we choose to align ourselves with the hope and fears of our early family and co-yearn with them, awaiting the birth of the redeemer, the Promised One. The Scriptures speak to this and intentionally call us to prepare ourselves for the Second Coming of Christ as well.)

Advent lasts four weeks, usually beginning Thanksgiving weekend and ending at the Feast of the Incarnation, Christmas Eve.

**Christmas.** The second season of the church is a 12-day period wherein we celebrate the birth of the Promise, the Son of the Most High, the incarnation of the Messiah Christ. Its colors white and gold symbolize royalty, holiness, purity, and divinity. The season of Christmas runs right into the new year, ending on January 6, which is the beginning of the next season, Epiphany.

Some Anglicans are so "Anglican" they put their Christmas tree up Christmas Eve and take it down 12 days later. While the spirit is endearing, real life gets in the way of that. Still, the church deems the Birth of Christ to be of such importance that it just can't be for one day only. We spend 12 days celebrating in Incarnation with feasting, giving, and spending time with loved ones, as it is a glorious celebration of Christ in Us!

**Epiphany.** Epiphany is a seven week span when we reflect upon the revelation of the Christ child to the gentiles (non-Jewish people).

Like the season of Christmas, Epiphany is marked with special prayers, colors and songs about the events of the Magi arriving and worshiping the child Jesus, *We Three Kings of Orient Are*, among the most popular. It is a beautiful part of the life of the church because it centers around the first time when worshipping non-Jewish people (Persian astrologers) were received by Jesus (essentially saying that Christ was born for all nations, tribes, and peoples) and celebrates the love of God to all peoples. Epiphany runs right into March, where we take a radical turn in the calendar of the church.

**Lent.** A "penitential season" is defined as an ordained period of time wherein we contemplate our spiritual life, a time to consider how the sacrificial life of Jesus bleeds into ours.

There are two official penitential seasons. The first, Advent, is more about waiting, fasting, and hoping for Christ to be revealed. This second penitential season, Lent, is about intentionally uniting with the Christ of the Cross, our sin, and his call to lay down our lives for his sake.

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and ends on Good Friday. During this 40 day period, we're recalling his trial in the wilderness, his travels to Jerusalem, his trials, scourging, and finally his brutal death through crucifixion. It's a time where we deliberately search our hearts in order to gaze upon the crucified One in both horror and gratitude.

The seasonal color of Lent, purple, reminds us of the bittersweet relationship between royalty and crucifixion. Because of the penitential intent of this season, the church omits all "hallelujah's" from its liturgy, prayers, and music.

"Holy Week" is such a substantial part of the church calendar that it is often thought of as its own season. In actuality, it is the final week of Lent. Beginning Palm Sunday, Holy Week traces the last days of Jesus's life - his entrance into Jerusalem (Palm Sunday), the Last Supper (Maundy Thursday), and crucifixion (Good Friday). During this week other services may be offered, depending on the church. Special readings mark each day of Holy Week.

**Easter.** In Easter we celebrate the physical raising of the dead of our Lord Jesus, proving that he is Lord over not only sickness, and sin - but death itself.

The Scriptures in the weeks to follow tell of the many post-resurrection appearances of Jesus and is a joy-filled season of the church. This 40 day celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is augmented by the liturgical color of white.

**Holy Days.** Throughout the calendar year there are many holy days, or "mini-celebrations", that augment significant events in the life of our Lord. February 2, for example, is the Day of the Presentation, when the baby Jesus was brought into the temple and "presented," to the Rabbi to be circumcised. Other celebrations, including The Feast of the

Transfiguration, and even special days remembering gospel writers, angels, and martyrs are often celebrated between Sundays as minor feast days.

One would be hard-pressed to say one holy day is more significant than another, but when push comes to shove, the Ascension of Our Lord Jesus Christ would rank perhaps highest.

In his post-resurrected state, Jesus appeared and taught to many people. Forty days after his resurrection, Jesus gave his final instructions to his followers before rising up and disappearing into a cloud. The Ascension is one of the most important celebrations of the year because it marks the official ending of the earthly ministry of Jesus. He was born, lived, taught, died, resurrected and - here at the ascension - returns to heaven, having completed his mission.

**Ordinary Time.** The season called, Ordinary Time, is the longest season of the church calendar, expanding right through summer and fall and ending around Thanksgiving again, where it all started, at the Season of Advent.

The Feast of Pentecost kicks off Ordinary Time. It was and continues to be a crucial day in the history of the church, as it is when the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples. Pentecost is often referred to as the birthday of the Church, because 3,000 people heard the Gospel that day and were baptized into the New Covenant of grace.

Ordinary time continues with her color of brilliant green - symbolizing new growth - and details the life of the church as she grows through persecution, multiplication, and increase around the world, sustained by the Holy Spirit.

## Rock Around My Clock

It has been said that, while the seasons of the church rightly reflect the life of Jesus, they may also reflect time, seasons, and even life events in our lives, too. For example:

At Advent, we are waiting, yearning, and searching, hoping to find God. We've heard about him, but are desperate in our darkness to find new hope and a new light to guide us to the Father. At Christmas, we receive the birth of Christ in the manger of our hearts. We are born again and Christ lives in us. Epiphany reveals to us a God who shines his Kingdom light upon all people. It is a time when we, like the Magi of old, bring our gifts of gratitude (our lives) and lay them at the feet of the manger. It is also a time to celebrate the mission of the church, and her call to get the Gospel out to every nation under the sun. Lent allows us to see how Jesus navigated the highs and lows in his life, fighting the devil, his persecution and perseverance, that we too in our spiritual struggles can fight to remain true to his holy calling. In Holy Week we walk with Christ to the Cross, dying to ourselves, solemnly united with the terrible price of our sin on this sinless Person. At Easter we arise in new life from the grave, raised with Christ and filled with the joy of heaven. We come alive with the realized power to free us from the bonds of our own addictions, sins, and even death. At Pentecost we are filled with the Holy Spirit's power to spread the good news to the countries of the world. And Ordinary Time helps us to take on the mind of Christ and become strong in the power of his grace. We hear stories of the early church, her miraculous life, and how to do church from day to day. Ordinary time isn't really "ordinary," as it is the time when the Kingdom of God fills the church, expands her horizons, and fills us with the hope of heaven.

One can see that the truth and mysteries of God in us can grow deeply year after year, season after season, of worship in the Anglican church!

We love our church. We know we're not the only part of the Body of Christ, yet our beautiful facet of the grace of God, earmarked with richness, songs, hymns, liturgy, and an annual recounting of the life and witness of our Lord Jesus Christ is just about as good as it gets for most of us!

It's always a joy for me to see people coming alive in our worship services. People are often struck by the depth of prayer, the power of ancient words coming to life through the preaching of the word, and the weekly challenge to surrender one's heart to Jesus and embrace him as Lord and Savior.

Many land in our church having had church experience in other churches. Some arrive from a church where they've never been encouraged to receive Christ as Savior, others come in from places where the Scriptures had less emphasis. Still others come from places where the interaction between God and the congregation through the Holy Spirit has been minimized.

The beauty of our church is that we seek to unite these expressions of church experience into one. We call it, Three Streamed Worship.

## Three Streamed Worship

Anglicans infuse three ways, or streams, of worship into just about everything we do. This would include everything from songs, prayers, worship postures, even down to clothing, furniture, counseling methods, and theology. It is a balanced tension which keeps our expression and devotion to Jesus alive and vibrant.

Perhaps you've heard the old saying: Too much of the Word without enough of the Spirit and you'll dry up; too much of the Spirit without enough of the Word, you blow up; but with a perfect balance of Word and Spirit, you'll grow up!

Three streamed worship has this same idea, except we have three balanced points, not two. They are traditional, evangelical, and charismatic. In a well-balanced Anglican service you will find hints of these three streams. We believe these streams represent major elements of our lives in God and present a trinitarian expression which serves to teach, empower, and delve us more deeply into the mystery of the Godhead.

Let's take a closer look at these three streams and see how they work.

### **Traditional**

One of the first things a person notices when they walk into an Anglican service is that it looks very "catholic," as in "the Roman Catholic church," or any other liturgical church.

There are candles on the altar, the changing of liturgical colors throughout the year, and even a christian calendar that marks different seasons of the life of Jesus. You'll see ordained people (priests, deacons, and bishops), you'll read pre-chosen, lectionary-based reading programs that celebrate various feast days, and you get to celebrate Christmas for a full 12 days. There are hymns from the 3rd century, prayers from martyrs, and a sense that what is going on around you has been going on since the early church.

This is the traditional stream of the church. It is important to us, so it's important to spend a bit of time on it, and how we came to be who we are today.

Much of it stems back to ancient synagogue practice, even before the time of Jesus. We read and preach from scriptures using a pre-assigned lectionary, just like ancient (and modern) synagogue practice. Rabbi's also led their congregations in the celebration of various holy days, wore robes, stoles around their necks, commented on Scriptures after they were read, and led their people in prayers to Yahweh (just like we do).

With the coming of the Messiah, and the birth of the church, especially as she grew into Rome, we maintained the look and feel of the Jewish synagogue as our Jewish roots, but included additional readings from the apostles and other "New Testament" letters. In addition, the addition of the Lord's Supper became a pivotal point each time worshippers gathered.

The "mass," as it was called, was originally written in Greek, yet by the late 4th century, it went completely Latin. Different church Fathers, such as Gregory the Great (who reigned as pope from 590 AD to 604 AD) did major editing in the mass and made wonderful adjustments to its rituals and expression. In many respects, what we do on Sundays goes right back to him.

At the protestant reformation (in the 16th century) we left what were considered to be the non-Biblical excesses of Roman (like prayers to the saints, purgatory, veneration of Mary, payments for the salvation of a dead person's soul, etc.), but kept what we considered to be the theological heart of the matter. Anything that wasn't deemed as a threat against one's salvation (like robes, candles, art, beauty, chanting, sacraments, and so on), we took with us.

This is why you'll see priests wearing robes, candles, sacraments, and sacramental rites in our services today, why people say we look like a roman catholic church. We change colors in various liturgical seasons, we have banners, wear crosses, and even light incense from time to time. In this way we will always be a church that worships with all our senses.

Traditionally speaking, when one enters a church, he or she is viscerally connected to the stream of saints and their worship all the way back to Jesus himself. In a world ebbing and flowing with all manner of fads, strange doctrine, and flash-in-the-pan revivals, the traditional church provides a rare stability and confidence in where we have been, who we are, and enforces a timeless consistency until we will one day be gathered with all the saints above.

Each of our streams comes with baggage. For there have been excesses and abuses of the church throughout time. Of course we don't promote those excesses, but rather seek the heart of any given stream. Of all the streams the charismatic stream seems to have the most "red flags."

### **Charismatic**

Here is the second stream of the Anglican church.

For charismatics, (Spirit-filled, pentecostal, Third-Wavers - whatever you want to call us) the church is a living, breathing, interfacing, and dialoguing experience with the Person of the Holy Spirit each time we meet. A church that is charismatic is an exciting place to be because, the expectation is that the Person of the Spirit has been invited into the community and will show up!

Jesus said, "I will not leave you as orphans but will send you another, a comforter." By this he meant the Holy Spirit. The Spirit's presence is marked by love, joy, and peace. His presence may encourage a congregation to kneel in repentance, raise their hands in utter dependence, or to sit silently to be still and know God. He is the gift-giver, the fruit-bearer, and highlights the mind of Christ as Anglicans gather for worship. In many Anglican churches intentional time is set aside for the Holy Spirit to speak through his gifts in the people.

Churches may vary on the praxis of the gifts of the Spirit (i.e. how the Spirit is manifested in corporate worship) but we all "do church" with the awareness that he is in the house and a co-participant in the worship of the Father and the revelation of his Son.

At Andover Community Church (Anglican) we believe that a person is filled with the Father's love through the Spirit when he or she confesses Christ as Lord. We additionally believe there are spiritual experiences throughout life. Time and time again, the Spirit blesses, encourages, heals, cleanses, and calls us through seasons of life. In his letter to Corinth, Paul is clear to say the Spirit gives gifts according to his good pleasure. We don't differentiate between the gifts. We believe the true gift is the Holy Spirit, and, in him, all Christians have accessibility to all gifts, as he sees fit.

The late Rev. John Wimber was saved out of a heavy rock and roll culture. One day he walked into a church with his Bible, eager to experience the fullness of the Father's blessing. After the service an usher asked him, "How did you like the service today?"

It was okay, John replied. "But when do we get to do the stuff?"

"The 'stuff?'"

"Yeah, you know, the stuff," pointing to his Bible. "You know, raising the dead, healing the sick. The stuff?"

"Oh that. We don't do that anymore. We only read about doing the stuff."

"But I signed up so I could do the stuff!"

John walked out of the church disenfranchised that day but, as God would have it, became the leader of a church movement called by church historians as the "Third Wave" where they did (and still do) the stuff - all the time.

Being immersed in the Life and work of Jesus through the power of the Spirit can be tricky, subjective, and has been known to abuse people through false prophecies or other so-called "leadings of the Spirit." But we believe that, when governed under wise and sensitive leadership, the role of the Holy Spirit in the ongoing life of the congregation is nothing short of essential.

If the Tradition is the machine of the church, then the Charismatic is the oil in the engine. Both are desperately needed for the church to be nurtured and the world to be evangelized. But what is the message we've been empowered to share? Without a decent message, or vehicle on the right road (to keep the spirit of the analogy), the church may simply crash and burn, forgetting about her purpose altogether. This is where the third and final stream of Anglicanism comes in.

### ***Evangelical***

One can see if we were only traditional and charismatic we may get quite cultic, forgetting our purpose is to spread the Good News, not revel in mystery or subjective experience. That is why this last stream - the evangelical stream - is essential to our identity. Without it we would be an old ship, driven by a gusty wind, without a rudder.

In the words of Scripture, we have been saved to proclaim the marvelous deed of the One who brought us out of darkness and into his marvelous light.

We take the words of "the Great Commission," these words of Jesus to heart: Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 28:19)

As Christians doing life within an Anglican framework, we believe God has anointed us with the authority to preach the Good News. This is the continuation of Jesus' ministry, performed now through us, until he comes again. Fulfillment of

the Great Commission is a passion that we are fervent for. Anglican writers and theologians such as John Stott, C.S. Lewis, William Temple, Wilberforce and others reflect our passion to preach salvation for sin and new life in the power of the Cross.

The tenants of the evangelical wing of the Anglican church run along these lines:

- ✦ We were created good, in God's image
- ✦ Through Adam and Eve's disobedience we were plunged into spiritual darkness
- ✦ Even in the prophet's call to return to God, he had a plan
- ✦ He sent Jesus to live and die for our corporate disobedience
- ✦ We initiate his work of redemption in our lives through faith, through receiving him as Savior and Lord, which restores us in relationship with the Trinity
- ✦ We are then commissioned to spread the Good News of the life, death, and physical resurrection of Jesus Christ to others.

Evangelism takes on many forms. It doesn't always have to be about talking the talk (but it does mean walking the talk). There are as many avenues of evangelism as there are people in the world. God doesn't care. He'll use any method to bring people to Jesus Christ. That is just how big his passion is. He so loves the world that he doesn't want anyone to perish, but have an everlasting life.

Some evangelize through feeding the poor, others through visiting widows, or those in prison. Others write skits, make puppets, perform drama. Still others work in the government, sharing their faith by good works, writing books, playing in the NFL, or just hanging out and being available at the local Starbucks. Others paint, write music, pray for the sick, or give tons of money to missionary endeavors. No matter. It's all about getting the Word out so others have the opportunity to know Christ and make him known.

## A Cord of Three Strands

The traditional, charismatic, and evangelical streams of the church provide a beautiful balance - a luminous tension - wherein God is glorified and we continue in our growth as Christians. One can easily see how rich and wonderful Anglican worship has the potential to be.

Not all Anglican churches have it down. Some swing more to the traditional side of the tracks, others to the evangelical side. But the intent, the ideal, is to represent Jesus in these three streams each time we meet. Some church seasons warrant some streams above others. The penitential seasons, for example Advent and Lent practically begs us to get traditional - being still and knowing he is God - delving into the mystery of divinity and the sinfulness of our hearts. Other seasons, like Epiphany, remind us of our evangelical fervor to spread the Gospel to all nations. The charismatic stream empowers and renews us as we do "ordinary time," gathering together, spending time in the Scriptures, and in the breaking of bread.

At the end of the day we choose to embrace the three streams. They provide a certain accountability to the love of the Father, revealed through the Spirit, in the Son.



## Reflections:

- ✦ What strikes about Anglican worship? When you worship within a prayer book context, do you feel expanded, or constrained in your relationship with God?
- ✦ Which of the church seasons do you find most formative in your relationship with Christ? How are some ways you could dig deeper as you follow through the year's liturgical seasons.
- ✦ Of the three streams (traditional, charismatic, and evangelical) which one(s) has been foremost in your growth in the Lord? In what ways? Is there a cord(s) in the three strands that you are less familiar with, or are even avoiding. Talk to God about that. Ask him to reveal fears, misunderstandings, or why you are apprehensive about going deeper in this stream(s).

# **PART II**

# **INTENTIONAL DISTINCTIVES**

## Chapter III

### Rooted and Intentional

With all that said, feathers of apprehension still rise on the necks of those coming into a liturgical space from a “free worship” church. I know because I’ve been there.

When I finally came to a saving knowledge of grace I wondered how I could have been raised in the Episcopal church (faithful acolyte nonetheless) and missed it. I rose from my first conscious encounter with the living God fairly judgmental and fearful of that sleeping giant called the organized church. Against my will, God led me back into the monster. I argued with him. I told him he didn’t live in the Episcopal church and I didn’t want to go back. He most likely smiled and scooted me right along anyway. Since then I’ve seen beauty and safety within her walls.

If you are like me, afraid of the thing, or know someone who is, this section may be for you. On the other hand, if you’re sold out on Anglicanism but still are wanting to know a bit more before getting confirmed, this chapter may also work well for you. We’ll first review a bit of where we’ve been and head out into some new horizons of sacraments and theology.

### Liturgy: A Double Edged Sword?

The word “liturgy” either draws people in or repels people. It is a loaded term which carries much unnecessary baggage that some of us have been accumulating through the years. Additionally when people hear this word they often use it as a springboard into the pool of doctrines, dogma, and all the problems that caused the Protestant Reformation. Wherever we got the dirty laundry from - be it from the media exposing exposing priests, childhood memories of absolute boredom, or just plain out fear of people who dress in dresses and look like they carry the weight of the world - people have gripes about the liturgical institution.

One of the biggest gripes about doing liturgy is that it’s, “man made.” But in the history of the human race, liturgy was created by God. It may have been crafted into contemporary cultures through the ages, but liturgical expression of heart and progression into the Father’s heart has its origins in God himself.

While ancient Egypt had her sacrificial systems in place, our line of worship actually stems from the blueprints that Moses received atop Mount Sinai around 1300 BC. Residing at the heart of what we know to be “The Tabernacle of Moses,” was the Holy of Holies, the actual dwelling place for God in the temple. In order for the priests to offer sacrifices in that most holy place, they were instructed to move through a series of rituals - from start to finish - into greater and greater intimacy with the Almighty. They were to enter into the gates with thanksgiving, into the courts with praise. They were to slaughter animals for the forgiveness of sin, wash in the laver, and then they could enter into the Tent of Meeting where they would trim the lamps atop the golden lamps stand, share fellowship at the Table of Showbread, or lift prayers at the Altar of Incense. After that, the High Priest would enter into the Most Holy Place where true and intimate worship happened. That is called Progression. All ancient religions had it, and God used this template to create a place of praise and worship for the Israelites.

Fast forward 1300 years to Jesus. The synagogue movement was in full swing and Jesus himself carried out the traditions of liturgy in extreme ways. (Even God submitted to the form he gave us on the mountain.) As the church was established, it developed within the synagogue system, which was heavy with formal prayers and practice, prescribed times of singing, hearing the word, and even announcements. We know Jesus worshiped and taught and healed within the framework of synagogue.

As we grew, the church continued in that vein, but with additional readings, prayers, and songs in devotion to the New Covenant of Grace established through the true passover lamb. Sure, there have been bumps along the way, but by and large what we do today has its roots in yesterday - the yesterday when God set the whole thing up in the first place.

Our liturgical-ness doesn't exclude, or fly in the face of other churches who are more free-form (as we'll see below). We are not exclusionists, people who believe it's GOT to be our way or hit the highway. Most Anglicans choose to worship in this manner and would lift praises to God in worship just about anywhere else for that matter. Even so, if you look closely, just about every church has its own "liturgy," its own predictable flow, whether it's formally acknowledged or not.

Liturgy, or the framework of all we do in worship, is basically a road map through the service, a dance of sorts, between the people and the Lord from one end of the "temple" to the other - an ebb and flow sort of thing, as we glorify him through song, prayers, and solitude.

To be clear, liturgy is not something we do and walk away thinking we've done out but. It is very much a "two-way street" wherein there is much participation. If you imagine the various pieces of a typical Sunday morning service as a cluster of empty vessels on a countertop, we expect God to fill those vessels as we go along with his Presence. We read the Word, for example, and he cleanses us through it. When we ask for forgiveness, he forgives us. As we offer him bread and wine, he gives it back as his own Body and Blood. In this way, liturgy is very much a "responsive work," if you will, between the Lord and his Bride, a living and loving relationship between we and he.

A liturgical church is not meant to have "highs and lows" as you'll find in other churches. Of course, there are times when the Spirit is on a particular song, or the sermon was especially appropriate. But, at its core, liturgy is concerned as being a single, unified event, flatlined like a high altitude mesa, with no mountaintops or valleys whatsoever. This is a distinct difference from the way our, non-liturgical, brothers and sisters view church. Some churches esteem one part of their service above another (like the sermon, music, and so on), but through time this creates a dependence upon the personality of any given leader, or the performance of any given part of the service, and lessens the significance of the rest of the service.

N.T Wright has a great quote about the differences between liturgical and non-liturgical worship. He writes:

*"There is nothing wrong with spontaneous worship, just as there's nothing wrong with two friends meeting by chance, grabbing a sandwich from a shop, and going off together for an impromptu picnic. But if the friends get to know one another better and decide to meet more regularly, they might decide that, though they could indeed repeat the picnic from time to time, a better setting for their friendship, and a way of showing that friendship in action, might be to take thought for proper meals with one another and prepare thoroughly...."*

## What Intentional Worship Looks Like

- ◆ *Flatlined.* As hinted above, as we gather to worship Jesus liturgically, we are not as concerned with if "the music was good," or "if the sermon was good" on any particular day - or even anticipate any one part of the service with any higher expectation above another - as it is all one single, unified event, driven solely on worshipping the Almighty and lifting up a sacrifice of praise God. High's and lows do happen, goosebumps come and go, but with or without them, our insistence of glorifying God through liturgy is our essential work when we gather.
- ◆ *Well Rounded.* Embraced as a consistent discipline, liturgy provides the essential vitamins that are missing in many non-liturgical, or para-church settings. It's easy to be entertained with a single style of music, favorite themes, or even a list of preferred Bible verses to preach from. But a constant diet of only what we like makes for an anemic, mis-balanced church diet. (Imagine eating nothing but potatoes, or vegetables your whole life!) Our

Sunday morning lectionary (the Gospels laid out across the span of three years) assures us that we are exposed to the full enchilada - the sweet and the hard to swallow stuff. We are forced to deal with the hard things and wrestle with the full canon of the church.

- ✦ *Not For Me.* Liturgical worship tends to be more God-centered than me-centered. It's about God and we, quite frankly, have very little skin in the game. Of course, he will bless us through the doing of the thing, but that is perceived as icing on the cake of our adoration to him, and to him alone. For this reason the contemporary Anglican church has difficulty meshing with its non-liturgical brothers and sisters in the Lord. Take music, for example. Contemporary Anglican worship leaders can be challenged in choosing music from contemporary christian charts for their services. Why? Because much of the CCM music is lyrically about "me," what God has done for "me," how he loves "me," and so on. Much less music is straight out about God, who "he" is, "his" attributes, "his" Person, character, and so on. Nothing wrong with that on any level. It's that "we" as a people of God use liturgy to come before "him," and spend a less amount of time on what the Lord has done for "me" when we gather.
- ✦ *Commonality.* Our prayer book is called the Book of Common Prayer. Our prayers are corporate prayers. We take communion as a body. We are dismissed to go "out and do the work you have given us to do" - and so on down the line. Our worship is very much the collective worship of the body - a community, a group of individuals - and not a bunch of "me's" all independently fishing in the same lake together. A newly confirmed woman came to me once and said, "I love our church. We are all praying the same stuff together and it has such power." This communal experience lies at the heart of synagogue worship and, parenthetically, is in part, why we choose to baptize infants with adults.
- ✦ *Saturated With the Word.* Liturgy has so much Scripture woven within it that some have found it difficult to make a clear distinction between our prayer book (The Book of Common Prayer) and the Word of God. Another woman I know, after being an Anglican her entire life, finally became born again and was completely fired up in the Spirit of God. After her conversion she was reading the Bible for the first time with new eyes and expressed, "Gee, I had no idea how much of the Prayer Book was in the Bible!" It's important to note the framers of the liturgical services we use are created by expert theologians, devoted saints, and inspired by the Holy Spirit breathing through the Word of God.
- ✦ *Everyone Gets to Play.* As briefly noted above, liturgy is not like watching a sports game, a stage play, or even about being entertained. It is fully participatory and engages us all in the worship of God with the rest of the faithful.
- ✦ *Rooted in Time and Space.* Finally, liturgy connects us with history, with the larger Judeo-Christian story. When you think about it, when we worship through liturgical expression, we are stepping into the same ethos as millions of saints have through the ages. Not only that, but we are united with millions of others who, across the globe, are worshiping with the same prayers and united intensity and purpose. From Africa to China, a significant portion of the Body of Christ is lifting up their hearts through the ancient progression of temple worship.

## Sacraments and Other Distinctive

The celebration of our ancient faith works its way into what we call sacraments. Sacraments stand as avenues of God's grace, regardless of the weather, the spirit of the congregation, the political climate, or even the disposition of the priest. Regardless of anything else going on in the world, they, in themselves, are independent entities, having the power to pour out God's love, grace, and purposes upon the worshiper.

A "sacrament" is defined as, "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." A sacrament takes what is ordinary to us, like bread, wine, water, oil and, when blessed and consecrated to and by God, become extraordinary.

There are two main sacraments of the Anglican church: Baptism and Holy Communion. These are highlighted because they are what Jesus did and commanded us to do. Other important avenues of grace have developed through the life of the church, too. We call these Sacramental Rites. They include marriage, burial, anointing of the sick, confession, confirmation, and ordination.

Generally newcomers have little issues with the Sacramental Rites. The one sacrament many wrestle with is Baptism, especially infant baptism.

## **Baptism**

Anglicans do baptize people before they can think, walk, or even talk. The argument is strong for such a practice. Two thousand years of church history (including common practice within the early church) just to name one.

The idea of a "believer's baptism", or waiting for a person to be of a certain cognizance wherein they are able to understand and desire to be baptized, is a fairly recent phenomenon. It developed only after the Reformation in the 16th century. Yet, from ancient synagogue practice (i.e. ritual cleansing and even circumcision [see below]), through Jesus' day, and right up to today, the practice(s) has been continuously embraced, assumed, and "a given" by the worldwide communion of the faithful.

What do we really believe about this Sacrament and, perhaps more importantly, what don't we believe about it?

Anglicans see baptism much like an entrance to a wider life, a rite of passage, a ritual, which invites others into a covenant relationship with God. In many ways, baptism is to the new covenant what circumcision is to the old covenant.

In the old covenant, every male infant born into an Israelite family was circumcised on the eighth day to formally welcome the infant into the community, to initiate God's covenant with that individual, and to begin the process of living into a life of righteousness and the fear of the Lord. These were Hebrew children receiving prayers in a ritualistic fashion and leaving the synagogue with a visible mark, then identifying them as a member of the household of God.

Fast forward a few thousand years to Paul who writes:

In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Colossians 2:11-12)

Paul is essentially saying that, as circumcision was a sign of being a part of the covenant community back then, baptism does that today.

Baptism serves as a symbol of the covenant bestowed from God as a gift upon the child, and exhorts the parents to "be responsible for seeing that the child is brought up in the Christian faith and life." (BCP, p.302) The presumption is, that - through years of prayer, instruction, and modeling Christ through parents, God-parents, and the community of the faithful - this beautiful infant will one day make an informed decision to follow Christ on his or her own, to receive the gift of God's salvation, which is an act of God's grace alone (Ephesians 2:8-9).

Do Anglicans believe that everyone who is baptized will go to heaven? Short answer: No (though some may). We believe that both baptism and belief in the resurrected Christ with the forgiveness of sins are essential to get to heaven. The order of when these things happen may vary, but both baptism and belief are essential.

Both my daughters were baptized as infants. Every night up through high school I laid hands on them - sometimes blessing them as they left, other times blessing them as they slept - praying that one day they would come to their own in the Lord. I didn't take their baptisms as a guarantee of their arrival. When they made commitments to God, I see that was when their baptisms kicked in.

It's important to note not all clergy have the same theology around this sacrament. Some, considered "high church," believe that baptism absolutely saves a person, others not so much. In our church, your clergy will always preach baptism and confession as mandatory for salvation.

What about multiple baptisms? It is not uncommon for a person to come to their priest after a powerful conversion experience and want to be baptized, even though they may have been baptized as an infant. Let's talk about that.

There is the phrase in the Nicene Creed, "We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins" (Emphasis mine.) Originally, this phrase was included because people were being baptized numerous times for numerous reasons, which eventually devalued the Sacrament to a simple ritualistic cleansing. To make matters worse, people were being baptized for their dead relatives (1 Corinthians 15:29) presumably with the understanding that it would get them out of hell and into heaven! At the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, these practices were settled forever. Thus the Nicene Creed says, "one baptism."

In the New Testament there are a number of references citing the importance of baptism, Mark 16:16 and Acts 2:38 to name a couple. We believe it's essential to receive the fullness of his love through salvation. But the timing, or the order of when baptism happens runs on a sliding scale. Some of us grow up in non-Christian homes. We receive salvation in Christ and then get baptized. Others receive the gift of baptism as infants and when they come to faith, they have already checked that box. That baptism that happened "when I was a kid", it still counts and is considered valid. It doesn't matter when a person gets baptized, it matters that a person gets baptized,

As alluded to above, when people come to clergy after having a powerful conversion experience they often want to be baptized, or baptized again - which is completely understandable. This creates a dilemma because we believe in "one baptism." In the cases of those wanting to be baptized again, and who were baptized as an infant, things can get awkward. For a newly converted person to be told they cannot be re-baptized when they can't even remember the event and want to "do it right," it can take the wind out of one's sails. When up against the wall, most priests would go ahead and "baptize" the person as a "pastoral consideration." Yet, they would make it clear that the actions and prayers more so resemble a rite of cleansing (not unlike the ancients who had multiple rites of cleansing).

We'll get to **Holy Communion** in a later chapter. Here we need to mention another belief that engrains us as Anglicans.

### **Apostolic Succession**

Anglicans believe that her leadership operates in the same anointing, passed through the laying on of hands, as Jesus.

This belief is rooted in the Hebrew celebration called "The Festival of Weeks" (or Pentecost). After Jesus was resurrected he breathed on the disciples that they would have the authority to do what he had been doing, and to disciple others in doing so. The Spirit "fell" at Pentecost and the birth of the church was in full swing. Through the laying on of hands, Peter to elders, elders to overseers, and overseers to Bishops, and right on down the line, God sets apart individuals as mini-

shepherds to lead God's sheep. This handing down of anointing and ecclesiastical authority is what is called "apostolic succession," the anointing of clergy - the setting apart of clergy - that has succeeded back through the ages, to the Apostles themselves.

For many Anglicans "apostolic succession" is more ideological than historical, but it does help ensure an essential continuity of apostolic teaching. With the exception of a short period of time around 1054 AD, we have actual records tracing who laid hands on who all the way back to Peter himself, which is one reason why there is such a clear cut difference of roles defining the ministries between the "ordained" and non-ordained people, or the "laity."

Ordained clergy have specific callings and duties that lay people are not authorized to do. In view of the hundreds of multifaceted ministries of the church, these roles appear small, but they carry great weight. Through the authority of clergy, people can be raised up, equipped, anointed, and sent out into the world.

This reality came into play when considering whether I should get ordained, or stay in my fruitful ministry as a full time lay minister. I had ministered for years in the church; youth programs, prison ministries, international missions, worship leading, teaching, and right on down the line. Life was great.

"So, why do I need to get ordained, Lord? I mean, I am already doing the stuff."

Then, one day someone said something that tipped the scales for me. "You know, Bill, as an ordained person, you'd have real authority in the church, to raise up others, like yourself, for the purposes of the Kingdom."

That did it. And, since 1995, I have had numerous opportunities to disciple, train, raise up leadership, and bless others as they discover their vocations in the kingdom.

To some, being a part of a hierarchical church with archBishops, bishops, canons, priests, and deacons wreaks of bondage, red tap, and institutionalism. However God has set this up as the framework wherein we do ministry, and as a place of accountability, and when needed, discipline. In short, as we submit to one another out of love for Christ, we are propelled into fruitful ministry and even shielded in times of spiritual warfare.

This is the beautiful thing about the framework of our traditional church, this traditional stream of the church. The clerical offices and lines of authority do more than just grant people the right to ordain, administer sacraments to serve the people. They provide a shelter where accountability, exhortation, and - yes - even Godly discipline can and does happen under the tight-knit accountability. Many churches have no such structure and thus, when a leader is struggling with a sensitive issue, he or she has nowhere to turn. Worse, without accountability and spiritual direction, things can spiral into deep sin and bring remorse on many in the church family.

When you see a priest up front, it is not a simple matter of "what you see is what you get." The ordained ministers among you are tied into a wonderful network of other priests, all under the oversight of a diocesan Bishop. There is a whole life of the dioceses (geographical area of ministry) that most people know little about. Anglican priests are hemmed in in a wonderful system of Godly checks and balances which protect the flock, and the ordained as well.

#### Reflections:

- ◆ What has your experience been of organized church, i.e. Liturgy. In what ways has/or could liturgy act to form you into the image of Christ?



- ◆ What is your history of baptism? Baptized as an infant or adult? Has your understanding on baptism changed as you've matured? How so?
  
- ◆ The institutional church... Reflect a bit on the pros and cons of having such a tight-knotted network of church leadership.

# Chapter IV

## Prayerbook Worship

We turn next to the substance of the matter: The Worship Service itself. At Andover, our Sunday worship mainly revolves around Service of Holy Communion. Occasionally we'll worship through Morning Prayer, Compline, and Midday Prayers, but "communion" is the main liturgy on Sundays.

### Mapping the Morning

From the moment we enter the building and into the service we step onto a moving escalator wherein we are moved from the Outer Courts where we hear the word and appropriate forgiveness through the songs, hymns, and spiritual songs of the "Ministry of the Word," to the Inner Courts where we are brought into deep intimacy with our Heavenly Father through "The Holy Communion."

Our Sunday service is essentially divided into two parts, with various activities listed under each main heading. Mapping it out, it looks like this:

- ✦ The Ministry of the Word
- ✦ Opening Acclamation
- ✦ Collect for Purity
- ✦ The Gloria
- ✦ The Collect of the Day
- ✦ The Lessons
- ✦ Sermon
- ✦ Nicene Creed
- ✦ Prayers of People
- ✦ Confession of Sin & Absolution
- ✦ The Peace & Announcements
- ✦ The Holy Communion
- ✦ The Great Thanksgiving
- ✦ The Sanctus
- ✦ The Lord's Prayer
- ✦ The Breaking and Receiving of the Bread
- ✦ Post Communion Prayer

Sunday morning liturgy is divided in two, with two different emphasis, each to either side of The Peace. On one side of The Peace we are centered around the Word of God, on the other side of The Peace we are centered on Holy Communion, or the Eucharist.

Visually, The Word of God, or the first part of the service, is centered around the pulpit and the lectern. We hear the word read, preached, and we pray around these two pieces of furniture. Afterwards, with The Peace being the tipping point, our attention shifts to the center table, or altar for the remainder of the service. Our highest values on Sundays are the Word and the Sacrament (Communion. This is taken directly from Acts 2:42, "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Let's break it down a bit. Remember, everything is done for a reason, nothing by accident. There is much symbolism in our worship. We sing, we eat, we smell, feel, taste, hear, and even exchange the "kiss of peace."

## The Ministry of the Word

Remember we mentioned the word "liturgy" actually means work, "the work of the people." Our times of worship are not just blobbing in a pew, seeking to be entertained. Liturgy demands interaction. We interact with prayers and songs. We stand up, sit down, and, in some churches, kneel, genuflect, cross our hearts, and even bow. This is real work which requires intentional engagement in the doing of the thing. Think of it as a dance, where sometimes you are being led through the song at a pace, with direction, and other times you are leading with spontaneity and passion.

The prayers, collects, psalms, Scripture, and creeds are practically unchanged from the ancient worship of the Hebrew temple and Jewish synagogue worship. Scriptures are read and commented on through reflections, or a sermon. The worshiper is challenged by Scripture and encouraged to take on the mind of God through the words of the sermon.

The sermon demands a response. How do we "Amen" what we've heard? How are we to realign our hearts with the truth of what was just preached? We do that through reciting a creedal statement. Usually it's the Nicene Creed, but it could be a song, or informal confession as well. The definition of a "creed" is belief, what we ascribe to, what we believe in, and eventually, live into. As the late Rich Mullens said it well in his song, Creed:

*And I believe what I believe is what makes me what I am.*

*I did not make it; no, it is making me.*

*It is the very truth of God, and not the invention of any man.*

The creed is our response to the word preached; one of two "altar calls," if you will, built right into the service.

After the creed, we drop to their knees in prayer. The Prayers of the People give us time and space to pour out our hearts to the God who hears our prayer. These prayers are as old as the hills and generally circle around six areas: the universal Church - members and mission - the nation and those in authority, the welfare of the world, concerns of the local community, those who suffer and in any trouble, the families of the departed.

In most services, special room is allocated for spontaneous prayers. Often people come to services with burdens or personal prayers. We encourage people to make their prayers silently or aloud for all of us to hear and "Amen."

The prayers close out with the Confession and Absolution of Sin. This is when we confess our sins (intentional or accidental, known, or unknown) and to receive afresh the forgiveness of Christ through the eternal words spoken by the

priest. The Absolution is when we integrate the words of Christ, through the clergy person, into our hearts, remembering that we, in Christ, are absolved from our sins.

After we have confessed and heard these words of forgiveness for ourselves, we have nothing better to do than to share the wealth with others. We arise with one another and share the corporate joy of God's mercy in the words to all around us. "Peace be with you! - And also, with you!"

## Holy Communion

After The Peace, things take a dramatic turn.

Most of the activity up to this point has taken place at the pulpit, where the Word is best proclaimed. Now we move to the table, or altar, to celebrate Christ's symbolic and sacramental presence: a meal from a table, a sacrifice on an altar.

Taking communion, or Eucharist, or the Lord's supper, continues to be the norm for Anglicans each week. For some, this happens too often. "The Eucharist is too holy to take each week. It becomes too commonplace, too routine, so as to lose its unique holiness," they may say. And, on some level, they may be right. It is easy to mindlessly go through just about anything if you don't engage in it, for whatever the reason.

That being said, Anglicans take seriously the words of Jesus, "Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." Many have found a weekly communion service to be a life-giving event, a time when they are renewed in who they are in Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit to live into his purposes.

Receiving communion is a privilege and high honor, a means of grace whereby the God of the Cross infuses himself over and over with the accolades of his very Live to us. It is noteworthy to mention that, in the early church, non-believers (along with those involved in the three year study of becoming Christians, "catechumens") were forbidden to take communion. The blessing and receiving of Holy Communion was and is still reserved for the elect alone. While this sounds exclusive and unfair in our world where anything goes, the Word is clear: there are some things exclusively offered for disciples of Christ, and disciples of Christ only. This is one of them.

Back in the day, after the ministry of the Word of God, non-believers and those yet-to-be-confirmed, were actually escorted out of the building! One can only imagine that, after conversion and proper instruction, how marvelous it was to finally remain in the service, hear the prayers, watch the priest bless and consecrate the bread and wine, and finally receive the Lord's Supper for themselves!

Let's talk about giving. Above all, Christians are givers. We have been given so much that it is only right to provide time in the service when we, too, offer ourselves to the Lord, as he has offered himself to us. This part of the service, the Offertory has not always been a time to collect money, but to offer hearts as well. In the early church, this was the time when people gave their best to God. Oftentimes these offerings would be in the form of goats, chickens, eggs, hay, and other things representing the work of one's hands. I was in a service in Kenya when, at the Offertory, a little boy brought a goat to the front of the church. He tied it to the base of the altar table with a frayed rope, where it stayed the rest of the service, bleating, peeing, and finally sleeping until it was over. I've often wondered what would happen if that were to happen in our church! Through the years, and especially in the west, money became the norm for giving. The giving of tithes (10% of one's income) is normal practice for Anglicans (to be discussed further below).

Regardless of what is brought to the table at The Offertory, at the center of it all, and most importantly, it is the bringing forth of all we are (heart, mind, and soul) before the Lord. Why? Because he brought forth to the altar (symbolized by the cross) all he was for us.

## Eucharistic Insights

Moving into this second piece of the service we observe many things happening. Earlier in the service, most everything that was said and done was lead by lay people (people not ordained). While there is much room in our services for the laity to serve (i.e. to lead prayers, read Scripture, music, usher, acolyte, ect), it is here when the service takes on a noticeably more priestly approach, performed by a deacon, priest, or bishop. The story of redemption is retold, and we find our place once again soberingly cognizant of the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Eucharistic Prayers solicit responses from the people from time to time, again, not unlike a dance. It is a participatory, community-based, celebration when the gathered saints continue to partake in the redemption story - the life, death, and resurrection of their Lord. In the prayers we are reminded of the full story of redemption: from Eden to Gethsemane and right up through the resurrection and ascension. Within a few minutes of the clergy person saying the eucharistic prayers, we have experienced the story of redemption, "His-story" of salvation.

The substance of these prayers is intense, (hearing the extreme love God who sent his Son to die for us while we were yet unborn sinners), but the overarching spirit of these prayers are meant to be more celebratory than sad. This is why, in spite of it all, we celebrate the eucharist.

At one point in the prayers, the clergy person invokes the Holy Spirit upon the elements (called the *epiclesis*). This is when the Spirit fills the bread and wine in a supernatural way, igniting them with the supernatural substance of the Body of Christ. We'll speak of this later, but we believe the Spirit actually inhabits the bread and wine. It is this what we call, real presence. True, Jesus is in heaven and seated at the right hand of the Father, but he is equally here in the form of his Body (in the community) and really present in the bread and wine through the Spirit.

Truly understanding the power of this mystery is something no one will ever truly comprehend. I once was reprimanded by an old lady for giving a piece of a communion wafer to an infant.

"You shouldn't have done that," she scolded me in the hallway after church. "That little baby has no idea what it means to take communion."

After a moment's thought, I responded. "Do you?"

She huffed, spun around on a heel and scurried down the hallway.

So it goes.

That being said, it is a mystery. People receive the Lord's Supper with a variety of beliefs and expectations. Some may eat and drink communion simply as a reminder of the tremendous price paid for their salvation. Some may do it simply because Jesus said to do it. Others approach the bread and wine/juice seeking power, forgiveness, anointing, etc., and thus look to the Sacrament for help in their time of need - "Food for the journey," as I sometimes will say.

In a dramatic story illustrating the power of the sacrament, there was a heroin addict at a church I worked in who, as she received the consecrated bread and wine, was completely delivered from her addiction.

Regardless of how one interprets God's Real Presence, we all recognize he does different things at different times, all according to the will and good purposes of the Father as we approach the altar rail with faith, and with thanksgiving. We

approach the clergy as servants before our King. Our behaviors, adoration, and hearts reflect that this is a most sacred of times.

## A Well-Trodden Path

Our time together in this chapter provides a thumbnail sketch of the service flow on Sunday mornings. From church seasons, music, prayers, colors, timing, where what is done where - everything is done intentionally. Everything has a place. And everything has been done like this for thousands of years. We are members of a world-wide communion of fellow Anglicans (upwards of 83 million) who also are reading the same Scripture, praying the same prayers, and using a common liturgy to express adoration and praise to the Father of Lights, and we will be the continuous backbone of those yet-to-be-born-againers who have yet to be born for the tradition to continue until Christ comes again.

### Reflections:

- ◆ What are your thoughts about the intentionality of the Sunday morning service? How does personal participation in the liturgy either make or break its intent?
- ◆ The roadmap for Sunday mornings is fairly predictable and stable. Does this comfort you or prevent a roadblock for you in your worship? Why?
- ◆ How has the mystery of the sacrament of Holy Communion been received in your life? What is your belief in it, and why do you take it?
- ◆ What insights have you learned from this thumbnail description of the service? Any "aha" moments?

# **PART III**

## **BREAKING DOWN A TYPICAL SUNDAY MORNING**

# Chapter V

## A Celebration of Eucharist (Pt.1)

Up to now we've been fairly "broad brushy" about a typical Sunday morning service. We've talked about church seasons, colors, the two main elements of a typical Sunday communion service. For many of you, it's just about all you care to take.

However, as mentioned previously, everything we do has intent, history, and a method to its madness. Part III takes us even deeper into that.

In the next two chapters we are going to take a deeper look at the road map from processional to recessional. This will help you immensely (especially if you are new to the place) the next time you step into the liturgy on Sunday mornings.

Let's take a deeper look at the two parts of a typical Sunday morning: This chapter we'll look at **The Liturgy of the Word**. Next Chapter we'll look at **Holy Communion**, or the Liturgy of the Table. If you have a prayerbook, you'd be welcome to follow the progression right along here.

## The Liturgy of the Word

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This part of the service includes a number of sections, or bends in the road, at a communion service. They are:

- ✦ Opening Acclamation
- ✦ Collect for Purity
- ✦ The Gloria
- ✦ The Collect of the Day
- ✦ The Lessons
- ✦ Sermon
- ✦ Nicene Creed
- ✦ Prayers of People
- ✦ Confession of Sin & Absolution
- ✦ The Peace & Announcements

Let's break these components into bite-sized pieces.

### The Processional



Most churches begin services with a processional, or entrance rite. Music is played, and those directly involved in the service parade in the center aisle. At Andover Community Church, we don't have a center aisle. You'll notice we begin with a brief welcome and a time for us to gather as we stand and prepare our hearts for worship. This is an intentional quieting of our hearts when we take a moment to consider the Person whom we'll be worshiping, the King of all Creation. Yet, just about everywhere else in the world, the processional marks the beginning of the service. Thus, it is worth noting here.

In the early church, Christians met in homes. They read the word, sang, investigated the Scriptures, and celebrated the Lord's supper (Acts: 2:42-47). When these celebrations moved from private places and into public spaces, the priest showed up in the back of the church and processed his way through the building, casually stopping here and there, talking and praying with "the flock," enjoying fellowship all along the way. It was lovely, casual, and pastoral.

By the fifth century all that had changed. Now a formal processional was the protocol. A company of priests, acolytes (servers), and even musicians processed down the aisle and right up to the front of the building. In time this movement was perceived as symbolizing a procession into heaven itself, accumulating at the altar, where heaven and earth would later meet in the Eucharist.

### **Opening Acclamation**

From the onset, this service is about One Person only: God. The first words of the priest are, "Blessed be God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit!"

The congregation responds with enthusiasm, "And blessed be his Kingdom, now and forever. Amen!"

### **The Collect for Purity**

Scripture tells us our God requires clean hands and pure hearts as we come into his temple ( Psalm 24). The Collect for Purity does just that. A "collect" is a word that collects us, or unifies us, through a common prayer. This is a beautiful, heartfelt prayer which was written and introduced to the Church in the early ninth century by Alcuin, and we've been saying it ever since. It describes God as one who knows all desires, all our secrets, and to whom our hearts are completely open and transparent and it asks him to cleanse us through the Spirit, "That we would perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy Name" in the service that follows.

### **The Summary of the Law**

Jesus broke the entire OT Law into two commands: Love the Lord with all your heart, mind, strength, and soul. And love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30). Many times the Priest will choose to include this in the opening of the service. They remind of Christ's prerogatives for his disciples and cause us to ask for his mercy as we fall short of them.

### **The Gloria**

Now we turn our hearts to God in song and reckless acclamation for who he is, and his works of creation. This is a "glorious" time when we esteem God for who he is. We worship and rejoice in the God of our salvation.

The Gloria isn't a time to petition God for healing, forgiveness of sin, or even lift up prayers for ourselves and the needs of others. (That will happen later.) For now, we just worship God for who HE is, with expressions of enthusiasm, ecstasy,

and outpouring of praise, following the examples of Mary (Luke 1:46-55), Zechariah (Luke 1:68-79) or the heavenly chorus in Revelation 19:6-8.

You'll notice in the prayer book that the gloria is scripted. This piece of literature has been said since the fifth century and, of all things, contains lyrics to a song originally sung to us by angels. When the angels appeared and heralded the birth of the Son of God in Bethlehem, they sang these same words (Luke 2:14f). (Angelic words are also recited later in the liturgy at the Sanctus.)

The Gloria is meant to be an ecstatic hymn of praise to God, acclaiming his splendor and majesty in Christ. For that reason, some churches (like ours) choose to make our praises known through what we do best: music. Thus, the "Gloria Set" is a grouping of songs chosen to express everything that the written Gloria does, but through a freer expression of adoration. Augustine said it best: "He who sings prays twice." We tend to do three songs here, providing the congregation with an opportunity to enter into his holiness, experience the presence of the Spirit, and even receive guidance, empowerment, and affirmation through the operation of spiritual gifts.

### **The Collect of the Day**

The Gloria is followed by The Collect of the Day. Led by the priest, this prayer provides another time to "collect" our hearts and unite the congregation in the theme of the day. Each day of the church calendar has a well-articulated theme, a reflection, or honors a Biblical event. Everything is chosen to align itself with this theme.

The Collect of the Day is made up of three distinct components, readily recognizable to the discerning worshiper. We'll label them and identify them in the example below. It firstly begins with an address to God that describes him, or mentions one of his divine attributes (1), then moves into a particular request, or petition (2), and ends with a reminder to us, to whom we are praying (3).

Here is an example of a "Collect of the Day," the one we say each year when celebrating the Baptism of Jesus:

- ◆ *Eternal Father, who at the baptism of Jesus revealed him to be your Son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit;*  
(Attribute or Divine Description)
  
- ◆ *Grant to us, who are born again by water and the Spirit, that we may be faithful to our calling as your adopted children;* (A particular request, or petition)
  
- ◆ *Through Jesus Christ our Lord; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.* (A reminder of who it is we're praying to).

The Collects provide a theme, or trajectory, for the entire service. This same theme is highlighted in The Lessons. Each Collect of the Day has this precise pattern. See if you can recognize it on Sunday!

### **The Lessons**

Scripture tells us, "Faith comes from what is heard" (Romans 10:17). This is the part of the service when we do just that: hear the Word of God. Our lessons are taken from the Hebrew Scriptures (the Old Testament), Psalms, Epistles, and a Gospel. The Gospel readings are spread out across a three year timeline. Year A, highlights Jesus's life through the eyes of Matthew, Year B, highlights Christ's life through the writings of Mark, and Year C through Luke. The Gospel of John is

intertwined through all three years and especially notable during Lent and other holy days. All readings are laid out on a prescribed schedule across a three-year span of time which we call the Lectionary.

In Hebrew worship and right up through Jesus' day, readings were appointed each for each gathering. This practice has continued through most mainline churches. Scheduled readings circle around the liturgical year with intent, so that the congregations understand the meaning of Scripture, context, and the cultures wherein they were written. The idea of having a set course of Scripture, or a lectionary, may come across as being dry, un-Spirit-filled, and rote but, in the long run, having a prescribed reading schedule has its advantages. The advantages of a lectionary include:

- ✦ It provides a sweeping vision of the Bible, Sunday by Sunday and through the year.
- ✦ It prohibits any given preacher or teacher from zeroing on their favorite verse, or theological perspective.
- ✦ It provides a predictable pace of Bible reading for those in the pews.
- ✦ It provides a commonality between other lectionary-based churches, especially other Anglican churches throughout the world.
- ✦ It builds a sense of comfort and continuity among the congregation.
- ✦ The congregation is exposed and even challenged by unfamiliar passages that may speak to other theological perspectives.

Recently a woman in the church approached me after the service and questioned me as to the reading of a passage of "scripture" from the Book of Ecclesiasticus. I blessed her for her keen Biblical knowledge and admitted, "Yes, there are sometimes readings in the lectionary that lie outside our Protestant Bibles."

The Apocrypha are ancient manuscripts that are not endorsed by Anglicans as Scripture, nonetheless, are occasionally read as examples of life and instruction of manners of the faith. They also fill in time gaps in the chronological line of Biblical events. We often forget there were hundreds of years between the end of the Old Testament and the beginning of the New Testament. But life went on. In these times, people still wrote about God. There were prophets, Kings, and historical situations wherein God continued to lead, guide (and discipline) the Jews as he had always done. There is great wisdom and continuity in these readings. Most of our "extra-canonical" readings stem from this time period.

Let's take a look at what is usually read and heard on Sunday mornings.

*Old Testament Lesson.* Anglicans spend considerable time reciting the Hebrew Scriptures (or the Old Testament) In the third-century, an Egyptian named, Origen, wrote: "Christ, the Word of God, was in Moses and the Prophets... Moses and the Prophets said and did everything they did because they were filled with the Spirit of Christ." We believe there is great value in the Hebrew Scriptures and understand Christianity as an offshoot of that ancient religion. Jesus himself said he came to fulfill the law and the prophets. Paul's words to Timothy bring home the point.

*"All Scripture is given by inspiration by God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." (2 Timothy 3:16,17, KJC)*

It should be noted that when Paul says, "All Scripture is given..." he was referring to the Hebrew Scriptures. There was no "New Testament" at the time of this writing.

*Psalm.* The psalter is an ancient hymnbook, filled with beauty and wonder, the highs and lows of life, and great wisdom and has been a mainstay in the house of worship for thousands of years. The Psalm of the Day is chosen to fall within the theme of any given Sunday, or season of the Church.

Great creativity can be engaged in the reading of the Psalm of the Day. It can be read aloud in unison, or alternatively from verse to verse, or even from one side of the church to the other. Reading psalms antiphonally, citing verses back and forth between leader and congregation, has been in the service from the beginnings of Christianity and most likely stems from ancient Judaism. An early tradition records that Saint Ignatius of Antioch, who was a contemporary of the Apostles, had a vision of heaven where there were angels singing antiphonally around God's throne as well. Here we have another example of how the practices of our ancient roots are blended with just about everything that happens on Sunday mornings.

*The Epistle.* While the other Scriptures read are chosen to promote a certain theme, the Epistle is not. If it happens, it's merely coincidence. Most epistle readings are stand-alone readings and teach us Christian theology and the life of the early church.

*The Gospel.* The final reading before the Sermon is the Gospel. Like the other readings, the Gospel chosen for the day follows the same thematic trajectory as the Collect of the Day, Old Testament, and the Psalm of the Day.

The Gospel is read by an ordained person, usually a deacon. When the Gospeller, or Gospel reader, picks up the book and reads, it is customary for everyone to stand. In the presence of a King, people stand. It has been said; if all the Bible is a temple, then the Gospels are the Holy of Holies.

In some churches, the Gospeller will actually walk into the congregation and read the passage from right there, in the middle of the people. This is to demonstrate how the Word of God (Jesus) dwells in the midst of, or tabernacles within, his people - a powerful symbol of the "Word made flesh" (John 1:14).

You will remember we noted in a previous chapter that the Anglicans like to "move around" as they worship. We bow, genuflect, kneel, stand, raise our hands and, of course, our vocal cords. At this point in the service, as the Gospel of the day is introduced, people will often sign themselves with a small cross on their forehead, lips, and chest to signify their desire that the Living Word would live in their understanding (crossing the mind), be known through their words (a cross the lips), and be devoted in their hearts (as the chests are cross).

## **The Sermon**

The sermon, or homily, is traditionally an explanation of the words from the scriptures on any given day. It is essential that we not only understand what ancient scripture meant to the original hearers, but also to understand what they mean for us today and how to appropriate them into everyday life.

Even in Jesus' day effort was made to read the Scriptures and then to unpack what they meant to the hearers. We hear Jesus explaining ancient texts to others on at least two different occasions (Luke 4:16-20 and Luke 24:27). Scripture for scripture's sake is no good for us. As a charismatic church, we seek to understand the Word preached, knowing as we live it out we'll be washed and empowered to live Godly lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Some people look to the sermon as the "high point" of the service and are disappointed that the sermon is just another beautiful facet of the entire liturgy, where there are no high nor low points, but a single entity. That takes some getting used to but in time the congregant begins to hear the living Word through each part of the service.

That being said, some preachers are indeed more anointed than others. They can communicate the truth in ways that people get it. And it's important that we get it. The goal of the preacher is to explain the Scripture, help us to understand what it meant then, and how we can live it today. Back in the day, people didn't know how to read, or the services were in another tongue, so they learned the salvific stories of Christ either through the movements of the clergy, or from the stain-glass windows that lined the church.

At Andover Community our preaching style runs hand in hand with the vision statement of the church: Sharing the Good News of Jesus Christ in the Anglican Tradition. This means that when a person steps into the pulpit they will be sharing the Gospel, what it means to be saved, and the tremendous love of God to all who receive him in faith. It's rare we preach a "sermon series," and rarer to preach "issues" (we save this for Sunday school). We are all about preaching the Gospel.

## **The Creed**

Creed, or credo, means belief. There are three creeds the Church has subscribed to through the ages: The Apostle's Creed, The Athanasian Creed, and the Nicene Creed - each with its own language and particularities. Creeds were developed because official stances regarding the Faith needed to be made, usually to combat heretical teachings that were circulating around at the time.

The Nicene Creed is most used in our worship. It was formed at the Council at Constantinople in 381 AD (where even St. Nicolas had a role to play in its formation). It's important to know that every line of any given Creed speaks directly to a heresy prevalent in that day it was written. For example, when we say in the Nicene Creed that Christ was "begotten, not made," and "of one being of the Father," we are saying that Jesus has always been, and that he is of equal status and in relationship with the Father. Why does that need to be said? There were numerous "fringy theologies" that maintained Jesus was born a human and not God. Then, at some point along the line, he became God (perhaps at his baptism?). The Nicene Creed corrects that and says, "No, you have it wrong. Jesus was one being with the Father even before he set his feet on the planet." The Creeds anchor us to our core beliefs. They assure and remind us of who we are and what we believe. They are essential (especially in our day) and still stand as a Christian's confession of faith.

You may notice, during the reciting of the creed, some choose to bow, or nod their heads, at the mention of the Name of Jesus. This is a highly reverential act and based on the Scripture Philippians 2:10 (i.e. at the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow). Others may cross themselves when the creed refers to the resurrection, reminding themselves and reconsecrating themselves to Life after death. Crossing oneself here is a powerful reminder of our baptism, where we were signed with the cross and oil, and invited into eternal life in Christ.

## **The Prayers of the People**

After saying the creed, we approach the Person of the creed, seeking his face for mercy and strength to face the day.

In 1 Timothy 2:1-3, Paul writes to Timothy,

*"First of all, then, I ask that supplications, prayers, petitions, and thanksgivings be offered for everyone... This is good and pleasing to God our Savior."*

Jesus himself urges us,

*"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find, knock and the door shall be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7)*

Prayer is the lifeblood of the church. Tertullian, a North African theologian and early Church Father, said prayer is the “wall of faith: her arms and missiles against the foe who keeps watch over us on all sides.”

The Prayers of the People have many forms, and it is up to the rector or vicar of the church to choose which one seems appropriate for any given day, or season, of the church. Some prayers invite times of silence between the petitions. Others invite the congregation to enter into a spontaneous prayer time. The Prayers of the People are directed and will certainly always include prayers for:

- ✦ The Church
- ✦ The nation
- ✦ The welfare of the world
- ✦ Those suffering
- ✦ Those in trouble
- ✦ Those (and the families of those) who have have died

We always provide time in The Prayers of the People for spontaneous prayers, prayers for specific situations dear to the heart of the people. We encourage people, when praying aloud, to pray loudly, so we all can hear and “Amen” the petitions.

### **The Confession and Absolution of Sin**

The Prayers of the People have been a part of the liturgy of the Church since the second century. Later, in the middle ages, a Confession of Sin was introduced under this same general heading. Confessing one’s sin remains a vivid reminder of Jesus’s power over the grave to forgive sin, once and for all.

The Confession and Absolution of Sin serves a couple things:

- ✦ It assures the worshiper of his or her forgiveness in Christ.
- ✦ It sets us right with God, through repentance and faith.
- ✦ It clears our hearts and prepares us to receive Holy Communion.

After we have prayed for the forgiveness of sins the Priest (or Bishop) will speak Christ’s words of forgiveness, making the sign of the cross, over the people, declaring the forgiveness of sins in Jesus’ Name. The minister does not have the power to atone for sin. Jesus has already done that. The minister does, however, have the power to declare the forgiveness of Jesus to others.

### **The Peace**

Once sin is removed, the peace of Christ rushes into our hearts. The Peace is the time to share that peace with others. The “kiss of peace,” as it is sometimes called, is evidenced in thirteen different NT passages, and invites us to move around the church and, as I like to say, share the love. Passing The Peace can take on many forms: a kiss on the cheek, an embrace, a handshake, fist-bump, a “peace sign,” an elbow tap, etc. Either way you pass it, The Peace is a joyful expression of a repentant, forgiven, and Spirit-filled community.

The Peace also has another meaning. It invites us to reconcile with a brother or sister in Christ. Communion is to follow, and we are to approach the sacrament with clean hearts and pure hands. This means if we have discord with another member of the church, this is the time to make it right. You may not be able to talk the problem through to its needed extent right there in the three minutes of The Peace, but motives can be revealed and intent can be agreed upon to circle around to it later.

### **Announcements -- What Announcements?!**

Ok, so announcements aren't really a part of the liturgy but, to be honest, there is no perfect place in the service to have the announcements. Some have them before, others have them after the service. Most churches do it right here, nestled between the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Table. Announcements are when we step out of the formal liturgy and celebrate God's activities in the local church community. It may include the honoring or anointing of leadership, those with birthdays, or sharing testimony. It can also be a time when pertinent issues are presented before the congregation (such as a crisis in the town, or an emergent need).

This marks the official end of **The Liturgy of the Word**. From here on out, everything changes.

#### Reflections:

- ◆ People react differently to structure. Consider your own feelings about having a set "map" of worship. Do you see structure as being invitational in worship, or an interruption of what really matters?
- ◆ Reflect upon a time in The Ministry of the Word where God has spoken, or broken into your world in a way you weren't expecting.

## VI

### A Celebration of the Eucharist (Pt.2)

Back in the day, if you were not a baptized Christian, this is when you were kindly invited to leave the building. This sounds rude and horribly politically incorrect. (I thought we were about inviting people into the church, not escorting them out!) but the sacrament of receiving the Lord's body and blood was - and still is - reserved for God's elect, or as we often say, "all baptized followers of Christ. Today, we no longer dis-invite people to leave this part of the service. They stay, they watch, they observe, they may even think about what's going on - with the caveat of seeking only a blessing if they choose to come to the table for communion.

### The Liturgy of the Table<sup>1</sup>

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Liturgy of the Table is broken down in the following segments, or turns of the bend, leading up to the receiving of the Lord's Supper:

- ✦ The Offertory
- ✦ The Great Thanksgiving
- ✦ *Sursom Corda*
- ✦ The Sanctus
- ✦ The Great AMEN!
- ✦ The Lord's Prayer
- ✦ The Breaking and Receiving of the Bread
- ✦ Post Communion Prayer

#### A Bit of Context

The Eucharist (which means, thanksgiving, or giving thanks) has been celebrated for 2000 years. It was first "done," or celebrated in homes with a meal, very much like a home church or small group gathering. We get our first glimpse of this, and the vibe of the early church in general, in the Book of Acts.

They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts,

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<sup>1</sup> The terms "Holy Communion," "Holy Eucharist," "The Lord's Supper," and "Liturgy of the Table" are different ways of defining the same event. You'll see these terms used interchangeably as we go along.



praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved. (Act 2:42-47)

While the deep stream of communion has maintained through the ages, it has morphed along the way. Remember we have already been in the Liturgy of the Word, where we have given glory to God, heard the Word read and preached, recited the Creed, and lifted up prayers to the Lord. Now we'll take a deeper look at what the Liturgy of the Table looks like today in most churches.

## **The Offertory**

The Offertory typically is an invitation to offer ourselves - heart, mind, soul - to Jesus.

Money may be collected, as well as other gifts (like the bread and wine to be consecrated later). In agricultural communities it is not uncommon for the first fruits of one's labor to be given at this time in the service. In Africa, for example, it is not uncommon to offer goats, chickens, or even pigs as the "first fruits of our labor" to God during the Offertory, as these things are symbols of the worshippers, of who we are, all of which we offer to God. In the prayers to follow, and in like manner, Jesus will then offer himself to us.

There is a wondrous mystery here. We give all we have to God; he takes what we have, breathes his Spirit upon them and changes it into something we could never imagine - not unlike as we offer our lives to Jesus, he takes us as we are, fills us with his Life, and we are forever changed, unlike anything we could have imagined! This is particularly true with the offering of bread and wine.

Why do we give? Giving is all about saying "thank you" to Jesus. He gave himself wholly for us and we do the same for him. Christians have historically been some of the most generous givers ever. How could we ever repay what God has done for us?

In the Law (OT Scripture) the standard for temple giving was 10% of everything (before taxes). These offerings were brought into the temple and used for the ongoing maintenance of the buildings, to feed the poor, and to beautify the temple. Today, there is no such law, or ceiling, about how much to give (although 10% is a good place to start). In this day and age, our hearts determine what and how much to give. Whatever we choose to give, Scriptures give us a guide on how to do so.

Remember this:

*Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. (2 Corinthians 9:6-8)*

At the end of day, regardless of what we give - goats, money, or bread - God is all about the heart.

Setting the Table. A song is often performed or led by the choir or worship team as the Deacon prepares the table. Most appropriately, the theme of the musical piece is one of coming before the Holy One with gratefulness. We are thankful, we are a people being prepared to meet him in the Eucharist to follow.

# The Great Thanksgiving

The rest of the service is generally called the Great Thanksgiving. It includes various components which we'll highlight here.

## The Sursum Corda

We formally begin on a most joyful note: "Lift up your hearts!" "Let us give thanks unto the Lord!" "We celebrate!"

Thankfulness lies at the heart of eucharist (which means: to give thanks). This is what Jesus did at the last supper. "He took bread, and when he had given thanks... he took the cup of wine, and when he had given thanks." He celebrated the work of God in history, and the work of God through him as he would go to the Cross and be raised from the dead for all humankind. Thus, we enter into the eucharist giving thanks, too.

## The Sanctus

The themes of thanksgiving and proclamation continue as we join our voices with those around the throne, and the saints of the ages, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of power of might!"

Like the first line of The Gloria, this is a song learned from angels. When the Apostle John was caught up in the Spirit to the Throne Room of the Almighty, they were singing this song! (Compare Isaiah 6:2-3 with Revelation 4.)

Sanctus' have hundreds of musical settings, usually written to reflect the local culture of any given church. At our church, we have three variations of the Sanctus which we rotate around the church calendar. Sometimes the Sanctus doesn't need to be sung at all, but said. Either way, it provides another way to step into the mystery soon to be revealed through the prayers of the Celebrant at the table.

These prayers continue with a recitation of the story of redemption from creation to the cross and lay out the story of redemption using rich language and symbols. The congregation chimes in and affirms the prayers, most notably through what we call the *Gospel Acclamation* (Christ is died, Christ is risen, Christ will come again!) and we recite the Lord's Prayer. This is a powerfully mysterious element in our gatherings and causes us to be caught up in the living memory of the story of our redemption.

*Anamnesis.* "Anamnesis" is a word describing, in its simplest form, living memory. Its meaning goes far beyond the Celebrants' mentioning of the events of Christ's redemptive history actually makes those events one with us, as if we too were gathered at that Original Table. In short, Anamnesis happens when the redemptive story becomes so real, so fully integrated with our history, that we become spiritually united with the original disciples in that same upper room where Jesus is and was, there blessing bread and blessing wine at the Last Supper. Time and space bends and the whole Body of Christ through the Ages - including you and me - becomes one body, one communion, eternally focused around what is now happening around that one table. That is the mind-blowing reality behind that transformative word, "anamnesis."

*The Epiclesis.* Aside from the celebrant's numerous postures of bowing, lifting the chalice, the bread, and hands, our Eucharistic Prayers include a time when the priest will lay his or her hands across the elements, make the sign of the cross, and ask God to fill the bread and wine with his own body and blood for the people gathered.

This is what we call the *epiclesis*. It literally means, "calling down," or invoking the Spirit onto the elements of bread and wine, making them the body and blood of Christ for us to consume.

There are various thoughts on this sacramental act - exactly what it does and when it happens. Some believe the epiclesis happens throughout the reciting of the entire eucharistic prayers. Somehow in the midst of the unified prayers God shows up and blesses as he chooses. Others believe the Spirit's filling is more centralized when the priest calls down the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine and that is when the bread and wine is blessed, or infused, with the Real Presence of Jesus Christ. Either way, makes no matter. It remains a poignant moment of mystery and marks the heart of the eucharistic tradition.

After the Celebrant "calls down" the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine, he, or she, will then ask that same Spirit to sanctify us, too. Christians are acutely aware of their need for the Spirit in their life. This is the same Spirit invoked in the epiclesis, but now upon us. We now pray for God to send his Spirit on us, too - that we may be sanctified and made worthy to receive the consecrated Bread and Wine.

### **The Great Amen**

At the end of the Communion Prayers is a nearly riotous response from everyone in the house. The prayers recapture the wondrous story of redemption in a magnificent way and God's people affirm and bless who he is and his work of redemption by one unified declaration:

**AMEN!**

This word, "Amen," essentially means, "Yes!", "I believe!", "Make it so!", and "So be it!" When we say, "Amen" we are essentially saying, "I'm in!," heart, body and soul, both feet in, full throttle! AMEN!

(Next time we get to this place in the service say your "Amen" with *humph* and gusto!)

### **The Lord's Prayer**

The Lord's Prayer is almost, word for word, quoted from Jesus in Matthew 6:5-15 and was Jesus' response when his followers asked him, "Lord, teach us to pray." Thus, we have what is known as "The Lord's Prayer," and it has been a part of our liturgy since the very beginnings of Christianity.

In modern times, when we pray, "Give us this day our daily bread," we generally mean something like, "Lord, feed me food this day." Yet, from the earliest days of the birth of the Church, whether in houses, home churches, huts or cathedrals, this phrase, "give us today our daily bread," has always been associated with partaking in the Lord's Supper, which is why it is said at this point in the service.

In a document dating all the way back from the first century, the Didache instructs the early church to say this prayer daily, clearly and concisely. Later on down the line, in the third century, St. Cyprian and many others made a strong link between "give us this day our daily bread" and the Eucharistic rites they were practicing (emphasis on communion bread), thereby all the more securing its place within the context of Holy Communion.

### **Breaking of the Bread**

At the peak of the Eucharistic Celebration, the priest lifts the bread for all to see and rips it, or breaks it, apart. This is a powerful vision of Christ, the Bread of Life, broken and torn for us on the Cross. Oftentimes, silence follows this action,

after which the priest usually says, "Alleluia! Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us," (in the penitential season of Lent, the "Alleluia" is omitted). The people respond robustly, "Alleluia! Let us keep the feast!"

It's customary for those at the altar, and those called upon to give the bread and wine to the people (sometimes called the altar party) to receive communion first. From there a choreographed movement towards the people ensues and people come up to receive the blessed sacrament.

## **Receiving Communion**

From the beginnings of church and up through the Middle Ages, the priest would always take the bread and wine to the people, from the altar to the people, symbolizing Jesus coming to earth. This was a powerful image of God sending Jesus into the world for our sin. As recently as the 18th century, people began stepping from the pews and "coming up" for communion. Many believe that stepping up to the priest is a true act of faith, a faith through which Jesus can bless, heal, empower and convert as the sacrament is received.

All baptized Christians are invited to receive the Lord's Supper - as it is the Lord's supper, not ours. All baptized believers in Jesus Christ are welcomed at our table, regardless of one's denomination. Those present in the congregation that are not baptized believers, or would rather not receive, are invited to receive a blessing, or prayer, from the priest.

When receiving communion we place our right hand over our left hand to make a cup, or table, for the bread. This is because, in the 4th century, Cyril of Jerusalem taught, "with your left hand, make a throne for your right hand, which will receive the King," which preserves the integrity and utmost reverence for Christ who is really present in the elements. The priest or deacon will say, "The Body of Christ," or "Blood of Christ," or words to that intent - which is another practice that has been in place for thousands of years. This is a confession of faith, to which the recipient will answer, "Amen!"

The liturgical church has always been slammed by our evangelical brothers and sisters because we never invite people up front to receive Christ (although this does happen periodically through the year). Yet this is the earliest form of an "altar call." It is an outward proclamation to the church and the world of one's faith and intent to receive Christ as one's Lord and Savior.

Upon returning to the pews in solitude it's appropriate to reflect on who God is, how he dwells in us, and we in him. It provides time to ask, "What have I heard God say to me this morning?" and "What am I going to do about it?" The music during this time is holy, intimate, and reminds us of who we are as People of God.

### Reflections:

If you didn't know anything about Christianity, you would hear the story of Christ's love for us in the midst of the Eucharistic prayers. What part of "his-story" remains the most meaningful for you? Why?

In early days, when people gave their first-fruits at the Offertory (usually 10%) of all they've brought in, they physically approached the altar and laid their gifts there. Today, many choose to give their tithes through the website, Tithe-ly, or other online services. How does the shift in giving represent the giver? Do you have a preference in how and when you give? Why, or why not?

## Chapter VII

# Theology and Questions About Communion

### What happens when a person eats Bread and sips Wine?

There is much mystery around eucharist. Scholars have spent thousands of years linking it back to significant events in the Hebrew Scriptures and tradition has mystified it as a sort of time-continuum, and living portal between earth and heaven. For most of us, we take eucharist simply because Jesus told us to. Yet, things do happen on a spiritual plane. Let's look at a few of these here.

**The Kingdom of God is revealed.** Anglicans have always believed that real power is released through the Sacraments. For thousands of years we have continued to gather around the Lord's Table believing we are continually fed, nourished, and empowered through partaking in the blessed Bread and Wine.

Jesus is present in the bread and wine. If Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8) it means he is still doing the same things he did in our day and time as he was doing in his day and time. Same God, different time. Think back to the wonderful ways he extended the Father's Kingdom to others: he blessed children, forgave sinners, healed the infirmed, rebuked demons, filled people with joy, and reminded them they were under his compassionate care. These are but a few of the things that happen as we receive the sacrament. Many receive a new infilling of the Holy Spirit and walk away with new fortitude and sense of calling. John Wesley, Anglican priest and founder of the Methodists says:

As our bodies are strengthened by bread and wine, so our souls by these tokens of the body and blood of Christ. This is the food of our souls; this gives us strength to perform our duty and leads us on to perfection.

**We are remembered.** Remembering, or calling to mind how God took us out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, is a big piece of what happens during the Eucharistic Prayers. We recall what God has done for us in the recitation of the prayers. We are reminded of our corporate redemption in Christ as the people of God.

The story is laid out for us to help us remember the events of the deliverance of the chosen people from Egypt and the overlapping of those events with our own redemption in Christ. The ancient Scriptures actually commanded the Jews to remember the Passover Feast and the Last Supper, too. (See Exodus 12:14,17 and 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

Another way of "remembering", too, involves the bringing together of the fragmented body of Christ. Sharing food around a table is something we have always done well. Mealtimes are times when we gather not only to eat food, but to share and hear stories, give thanks, laugh, and ponder life. Somewhere in the midst of all that something beautiful happens - something you couldn't program or script: we are "re-membered," relationally with one another. When we find our place around the table, we rediscover who we are as God's pilgrim people. We hear the story of our communal redemption, purchased to be "a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that [we] may declare the praises of him who called [us] out of darkness into his wonderful light" (1 Peter 2:9). In the midst of the retelling, the outcasts in the church, the prodigals and alienated, are returned and re-membered within the cloak of communion; we exist once again, as the family of God. We have become re-membered to God and to the community of the faithful.

**The Communion of Saints.** Here is another Anglican belief which particularly appeals to Trekkies. Mystically speaking, as we gather around the table in our church, we are not alone.

This “body gathered” goes way beyond you and me in an old church building. It includes other believers, just like us, too. Those from every age - past, present, and future are clustered all around us, celebrating with us (and we with them) throughout all time and space. This is the “cloud of witnesses” mentioned in Hebrews 12:1. It is believed that as we celebrate eucharist, it invokes special attention to others around the table whom we love, but no longer see. Eucharis is being celebrated somewhere around the world 24/7 and remains the anchorage of faith and a celebration of the redemptive heart of God through all time and space.

**The Real Presence of Christ.** Anglican sacramental theology has a wide breadth and honors a wide variety of people’s beliefs around the mystery of what exactly happens when the priest blesses the bread and wine.

Some Christians are what you might call, “high church.” They believe through the prayers of the priest the bread and wine become the actual Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is called transubstantiation and is a core belief of our Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox family. There are stories of real power encounters in these high churches, and the respect of Christ within the sacrament couldn’t be more reverent. From the outside, it may appear these brothers and sisters are practicing idolatry as they prostrate themselves before the Lord, but we are only seeing the outer courts of their wholehearted devotion to Jesus. Other parts of the Body are considered “low church.” These would include our protestant brothers and sisters, as well as many non-denominational churches and para-church ministries. These folks would say we “do communion” merely as a memory of what Christ did for us, nothing more and nothing less. Still others believe God’s presence isn’t anywhere in the bread and wine, yet is revealed as the congregation partakes together and that is Christ’s body and blood revealed. Here one can see the wide breadth of belief: from the actual body and blood, to a memory, to a relational experience.

Anglicans believe in something called, “Real Presence” - that somehow, in some way, the Spirit makes Christ’s Presence real to those of us gathered through the eucharistic prayers. As the priest recites the salvation story, quotes Scripture, and asks the Holy Spirit to fall upon the elements, stuff happens, and we are caught up in a transcendent experience which dates back to the Upper Room, with them and the real presence of Christ. So we wouldn’t say the bread and wine become Christ himself any more than we would call it a pleasant memory, or relational exercise. We would submit to its mystery and validate the integrity of the sacrament by saying the real presence of Jesus has become integrated with the bread and wine.

The Real Presence of Christ is made known when blessed bread and wine is both believed and received, in faith, with thanksgiving - and always within the atmosphere of the gathered church.

The Eucharistic Prayers are beautiful expressions of the life and redemptive work of Jesus on our behalf. They are long prayers, each with four parts which correspond to a different action that Jesus took at the Last Supper: he took, blessed, broke, and gave bread and wine. Next time you are in church, see if you can identify these four parts of the Eucharistic Prayer.

### **Post Communion Prayer**

After we have received Christ’s Body and Blood give hearty thanks! Over the course of the previous 90 minutes or so we have worshiped, heard the word preached, prayed, and fed supernaturally. The post communion prayer encapsulates this and reminds us of our call to go into the world and “do the work you have given us to do!”

## The Blessing and Dismissal

As with all blessings in the Bible (over 80 of them) we believe real power is released when it is said and received with authority and humility.

The blessing we most frequently say is based on Philippians 4:7.

*May the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

This blessing is only given by a person who has been ordained and has apostolic presence and authority to extend God's blessing to others in a liturgical context. This particular blessing of Philippians 4:7 has been an ongoing thing in the church since 1548. The additive afterwards, "And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit [Ghost], be amongst you and remain with you always," was added a year later, in 1549.

As the celebrant blesses the people, you'll notice he or she lifts their right hand in the air before the congregation. This is an ancient rite dating back to Moses, furthering the continuity of our the Hebraic roots. The priest or bishop makes the sign of the cross before the people, uniting both OT and NT covenants as one before the dismissal.

After the altar party has vacated the area and the congregation is dismissed, there is a sweet time to reflect on all that has happened through the liturgy: the music, prayers, Scripture, breaking of the bread. It should be a quiet time where the saint lingers in God's Presence.

In our church, a deacon approaches the table and extinguishes the candles. (Most other churches have acolytes, teen-aged kids who assist the priest during the service.) The extinguishing of the candles is the official ending of the service.

Afterwards, she will turn to face the congregation with a declaration that essentially says, "The mass has ended, let the service begin!"

*"Alleluia! Alleluia! Let us go forth into the world in the power of the Holy Spirit!"*

In that state we are reminded that we are a light to the nations, a city on a hill, called to share the love of God to all creation. We have been fed, nourished and empowered for such a task. It is a wonderful privilege! How else are we to respond?

*"Thanks be to God. Alleluia! Alleluia!"*

## Communion Questions

**Q. I've noticed that the deacons or priests pour a bit of water into the wine. Why is that?**

A. The answer may surprise you. Originally it was purely practical. Through time it has taken on much symbolic meaning. Practically, in the time of Christ and onwards, the wine enjoyed by Mediterranean people was highly concentrated and syrupy thick wine. Oftentimes wine would be stored for months, even years, before drinking it. So it had to be diluted just to get it down.

Through time, however, people have gazed upon this mixing of water and wine with rich symbology.

- ◆ Our Roots. Ancient descriptions of the Hebrew Passover meal describe mixing water with wine. Like Abraham, Issac, Jacob and Moses, we are pilgrims heading for the promised land, having realized our freedom from slavery through the salvific death of Jesus. It is a direct link to the mixing of water and wine of the sages.
- ◆ The Deity of Christ. The mixing of water and wine speak to the union of the two natures of Christ (Fully God and Fully Man). When water and wine mix, they blend together in a way that can't be separated and become, in a sense, fully one, unified. This speaks to the dual humanity and divinity of Jesus, who was both God and Man, essentially one substance, yet impossible to differentiate one from another.
- ◆ His Life In Us. We are the Body of Christ, in communion with Christ, dwelling in Christ, and he in us. We are water, he is wine. Spiritually speaking, Christ in us and us in Christ, we are quite blended and indistinguishable from one another. (See John 15:4-5.)
- ◆ Salvation. Scripture is clear: we receive the forgiveness of sins through the blood of Christ (Hebrews 9:22) and we are washed by the water of the Word (Ephesians 5:26).
- ◆ His Crucifixion. A powerful symbol here - that of the mixture of water and blood that flowed from Jesus' side at the sight of the crucifixion (John 19:34).

**Q. Are there times when a person ought to refrain from taking communion?**

A. Yes.

When you take it flippantly, or in an unworthy manner. St. Paul wrote,

*"Therefore whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will have to answer for the body and blood of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 11:27)*

He goes on to say that people who have taken Communion in an unworthy manner have actually gotten sick and even died! (See 1 Corinthians 11:30.)

In other words, Paul is saying there is real power in the Eucharist and it shouldn't be taken lightly. Participating in the meal is a privilege and best received with holy intent and with an understanding of the mystery it reveals. It's not to be taken flippantly, but reverentially. That is what Paul is saying when he writes, "unworthily."

While the importance of personal reflection is key when receiving eucharist, Paul's chief concern about taking it in an unworthy manner is more about the church as a whole, the *community of saints*, and not the individuals per se. The misunderstanding here has to do with the word "you" in his letters. Paul is all about the unity of believers, and less interested in the individual person. Making the word "you" as "you plural," or "you all," is a middle-east cultural norm and quite a paradigm shift from our independent, American individualism. Most times when the word "you" is in the Bible, it has more to do with "you plural," as a community, and not "you personally." In the western church we tend to personalize everything like the "Pepsi me generation." But that is the furthest thing from what Paul is saying. With that in mind, let's return to what Paul is actually saying. He is essentially saying, "If you ALL take it unworthily..." and "If you ALL are taking it flippantly, not remembering the true meaning behind it..." and "If you are ALL taking it with huge divisions within your ranks, when there is gossip and bitterness, cliques and fragmentation among your community as a whole..." If that's the case in your faith community, don't eat it. For, in so doing, it will breed sickness, and even death among your ranks.



Another reason why a person should refrain from receiving the elements has to do with something we call "notorious sin." When a member of the church is intentionally rebelling against the Word of God, with no intention to change, church doctrine allows a priest to refuse a person communion for his or her own good. It is considered a loving, pastoral decision.

Finally, there is a practical side to all this. It's called "common sense." In the days of COVID, flu, colds, or other contingents it is morally irresponsible to share your germs through the common cup to everyone in the room. Additionally, recovering addicts will have a hard time explaining to their Friday night meetings that they relapsed on Sunday morning while taking Holy Communion.

We believe that taking the bread without taking the wine is just as valid as taking the bread with the wine - meaning: one type (bread or wine) is sufficient. Many churches only give bread and that seems to work just fine. If you are in a position where receiving communion would be unhealthy - or you feel you shouldn't be taking it for a variety of other reasons - step up to the priest, cross your arms across your chest and s/he will ask God's blessing for you.

**Q. I know Communion is holy, but I am too sinful. What should I do? Should I take it or not?**

A. Take it anyway.

Many of us restrict our accessibility to the sacrament under feelings of shame, or false conviction, believing we are unworthy to receive the bread and wine. To be true, *nobody is worthy*. Yet, such self-imposed restrictions may actually work against the spiritual life (healing, restoration, and deliverance) of the individual.

If you are repentant, broken, and seeking to live into the Light of Christ - regardless how often you foible around in the muck - there is never, ever, a need to personally abstain from receiving eucharist. If you are a Christian and repentant, humbled before the Lord as you approach the Sacrament, you are in a good groove. God draws near to the brokenhearted (Psalm 34:18). Your brokenness qualifies you to receive God's grace, forgiveness, and unconditional love through the power of eucharist.

The Lord's Supper has always been a place of refuge, refreshment, and empowerment for the humble, brokenhearted, and addicted. We approach the communion table with repentance, grief, humility, and look to Christ's body and blood as a place of forgiveness, cleansing, and grace. True, we may be "notorious sinners," - but in our repentance we receive all the grace we need to continue our pilgrimage of faith.

**Q. Doesn't it demean the significance of the Eucharist to take it every week? I mean, after a while, everything becomes rote and routine if you do it long enough. I'd rather just take it once a month so it remains special.**

A. Get over it.

Do you have sex with your spouse only once a month? Do you fear that too much intimacy will lead to the demise and dis-appreciation of your relationship? Hardly! The early church gathered and took communion each time they met, and we have that same opportunity. No one has to take it, all may. If you don't want to take it, you don't have to.

**Q. Wonder if I'm at the second service of the day? Can I take it twice the same day?**

A. Yes.

## Reflections:

- ◆ Spend some time reflecting how you have perceived taking communion. How do you view it, really? When you approach the priest what goes through your mind? Why are you there?
  
- ◆ What other questions would you like to discuss?
  
- ◆ It has been said that the liturgy of the Word and Sacrament is like a dance - where one person leads and the other follows, or participates through songs, prayers, responses, and movement. Read through the prayerbook liturgy and see that for yourself (beginning on page 123).

## Chapter VII

### Summary and Afterthoughts

The Anglican Church is a "three-streamed" pace of worship. We are evangelical (preaching a personal relationship with Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and the promise of eternal life). We are charismatic (providing time in the service for the Spirit to speak to us through gifts and pentecostal expression). We are traditional (capturing the ethos of the ages in ancient prayers, rituals, and celebrations of the Faith). This balance of praxis and theology comes easier for some than for others. In my personal experience, and returning to the church after a hard conversion and powerful infilling of the Spirit, I found the "traditional" side of things a bit hard to swallow.

As a child I was raised in the Episcopal corner of the Anglican Church, yet even as I served as an acolyte and went to youth group, I didn't have a clue about what it was all about.

When I surrendered to Christ and got saved on a beach in the late '70's my world was rocked. I had so much joy and literally had no idea how fun it could be to have a relationship with the Lord. I jumped hook, line, and sinker into Bible studies, learned the guitar to praise and worship Jesus, pressed into my spiritual gifts, had power encounters, deliverances, and shared the wonderful minister of the Holy Spirit and the love of the Father to just about everybody I met. Much to my remorse today, I preached against the institutionalized church and judged it as Body cold, old, and stuffy.

Then God got a hold of me one day. The conversation went something like this:

God: I want you to go back to the church," he said.

Me: The church? I am already part of the church."

God: I mean the Episcopal church. I want you to go back to the Episcopal church.

Me: But, God - Why? You don't live there.

God: Awkward silence.

Me: You're kidding - right?

God: Naw, not really. You oughta check it out. You may be surprised.

So I did. And as I reentered the sleeping giant my eyes beheld a wonderous thing: there were Christians in there! Even the priests and bishops talked about being "born again," and "filled with the Spirit!" I jumped in with both feet - knowing the intent of the Book of Common Prayer was really all about Jesus.

To be truthful, it was a bit frustrating. The perceived "clamp" on the Spirit's activities were hard to swallow. I had been getting barreled in the waves of the Spirit and involved in fast-paced ministries and evangelical mission groups. This new pace seemed constraining to me. It took a few years when I began to see the logic of the thing. While things seemed constrained, the amount of power that was released "in the constrained" was life-changing.

The Lord showed something about that "perceived clamp." When you put the spray nozzle of liturgy on a free-flowing hose, the power of the stream actually quadruples. It becomes laser keen, powerful, and hits its target every time. Since

then, I have learned that the so-called constraints of Spirit-filled liturgy focuses the hearts and ministry of God's people in ways that worship outside of liturgy could never do. It may not be the most exciting and happy place in the world, as it forces us to look outward, to work, and to extol God as a community each time we gather, but I guess that's why they call it a sacrifice of praise.

To be sure, the institutional church isn't the only place where the Body of Christ is happening. From independent house churches that meet without a building to Orthodox Cathedrals in Turkey, God is working and his people are worshiping. We honor that. The Body of Christ is magnificent in all of its expressions.

I am reminded of Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman at the well.

*A time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth. (John 4:23-24, italics mine)*

For us, however, in this part of the Anglican Body, our worship gatherings provide a rich balance of theology, practice, and rootedness that is both unique and needed in contemporary culture today. It is a glorious place wherein the atmosphere of heaven has freedom to fill.

I pray this booklet will serve to enhance your worship and your relationship with the Messiah Savior, Christ Jesus.

### Reflections

- ◆ What insights or "aha's" have you gleaned by reading this book?
- ◆ What excites you about participating more fully in the life of this church? What is still a bit disconcerting?
- ◆ Take five minutes of silence and ask God to fall upon you. Sit with him, and bring that with you the next time you enter the church building.

# APPENDIXES

# “Three Streams, One River”

A Statement of Identity, a Model for Our Life

Adapted from an article by David Harper, May 2003

## The Concept

The three streams concept was originally developed fifty years ago by a missionary bishop in the Church of South India, Lesslie Newbigin. In his book *The Household of God*, he compared the New Testament church to three streams coming together to form one mighty river. He labeled the three streams catholic, evangelical, and pentecostal.

Three Streams is derived from Psalm 46:4: “There is a river whose streams make glad the city (people) of God.” Its water brings God’s people into joy and wholeness—a reality that Ezekiel saw in his vision (Ezekiel 47) where he observed that, growing beside the river of the water of life were trees whose leaves were for the healing of the nations. These three great streams have flowed throughout Biblical and Christian history. The apostle John identifies them in his first letter: “There are three witnesses—the Spirit, the water, and the blood—and these three agree.” (1 John 5:8) Some of us come from the “blood,” or catholic stream, with its emphasis on liturgy and sacrament. Others identify more with the “water,” with its emphasis on the washing of the Word and personal cleansing. This is the biblical and evangelical—stream. Still others come from the “Spirit,” or pentecostal, stream, with its emphasis on the person and power of the Holy Spirit. The differences and even struggles which can arise between us often reflect our inability to understand another “stream” where we feel less at home. John is clear that these three witnesses are distinct, yet are in complete agreement! What do they agree about? They are unanimous about the person of Jesus Christ: who he is, why he came, and what he has done for us. These witnesses agree because, together, they create a brilliant composite picture of Christ that none of them can manage so completely on their own. Yet though their witness is in perfect agreement, there is also a dynamic tension between them. Let’s take a look at how each stream typically approaches six key areas of Christian life.

## Standards of Orthodoxy

### What it means to be a Christian

- ♦ Catholic: “By their fruit you shall know them” (Matthew 7:1). Orthodoxy is measured by commitment to living out the Faith by sacrificial service, particularly to the poor.
- ♦ Evangelical: “If you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved” (Romans 10:9). Orthodoxy is measured by a profession of personal faith in Jesus Christ.

- ✦ Pentecostal: “Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1). The Pentecostal standard of orthodoxy is measured by the exercise of discernment rather than by objective criteria.

## **Music and Worship**

Catholic: Psalms and other liturgical music, which help emphasize and illustrate the liturgy.

Evangelical: Hymns—such as the great hymns of the Reformation, which are rich in doctrine.

Pentecostal: Spiritual songs that arise out of and reflect what God is doing and saying now.

## **Authority**

Catholic: The Catholic model is hierarchical. It values and respects the office of leader, despite any shortcomings in the incumbent.

Evangelical: The Evangelical model is congregational. It values autonomy and independence.

Pentecostal: The Pentecostal model is spontaneous. Follow the leader who has the anointing.

## **Structure**

Catholic: Places value on centrally-organized and -led structures.

Evangelical: Wary of central organization. Prefers bottom-up, lay-led structures.

Pentecostal: To the Pentecostal, “structure equals stricture.” Preference is given to unstructured spontaneity.

## **Theological Emphasis**

Catholic: God, the Father

Evangelical: God, the Son

Pentecostal: God, the Holy Spirit

## **Key Aspects of Christ’s Salvation**

Catholic: The Incarnation. Strength: emphasizes Christ’s love for and involvement in the world. It takes this world seriously. Weakness: too worldly; can become devoid of transforming power.

Evangelical: The Cross. Strength: emphasizes Christ’s atoning death and the need for personal conversion. Weakness: tends to engage only those parts of the world which are considered already “redeemed.”

Pentecostal: Pentecost and Second Coming. Strength: emphasizes personal renewal and transformation.  
 Weakness: has difficulty relating to and transforming the world.

Here is a brief summary of the distinct approaches adopted by each stream:

	CATHOLIC	EVANGELICAL	PENTECOSTAL
STANDARDS OF ORTHODOXY	BY THEIR FRUIT	IF YOU CONFESS...	TEST THE SPIRITS
MUSIC + WORSHIP	PSALMS	HYMNS	SPIRITUAL SONGS
AUTHORITY	HEIRACHICAL	CONGREGATIONAL	ANOINTING
STUCTURE	TOP-DOWN AND CENTRALIZED	BOTOM-UP DIVERSIFIED	SPONTAINIOUS/LOOSE
THEOLOGICAL EMPHASIS	FATHER	SON	HOLY SPIRIT
SALVATION EMPHASIS	INCARNATION & CROSS	CROSS & RESURRECTION	PENTECOST

## So what will a “three streams, one river” church look like in practice?

### Standards of Orthodoxy

A “three-streams” church won’t separate faith from works. It will be passionate about calling people to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through repentance and faith—but it will not be tempted to see that as an end. The goal is also to call people into a life of obedience to Jesus by sacrificial service “to the least of these my brothers.” One of our mission statements—Servant Ministry—captures that truth.

### Music and Worship

All the great kinds of music that Paul mentions in Ephesians 5:19—psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs—are welcomed and balanced in a “three streams” church. Each has its own unique place: “psalms”—liturgical music—to enhance the liturgy; “hymns,” which express the grandeur and majesty of God and which are rich in doctrine and biblical imagery; and “spiritual songs”—music which gives contemporary expression to what God is saying and doing to his Church now. At our Saturday and Sunday worship services we employ all three genres of music, and celebrate Holy Communion every weekend. At The Father’s Blessing and First Wednesdays, which exemplify the Pentecostal stream, greater emphasis is placed on spiritual songs.

### Authority

Our model of authority is hierarchical. Bishops have spiritual authority over their clergy. Clergy have spiritual authority over their congregations, under the bishop. A “three-streams” church receives and respects that authority. But it will



expect those in authority to recognize the spiritual giftedness of the congregation, and to call all its members to the work of ministry. A “three-streams” congregation also understands the futility of engaging in ministry without the empowering of the Holy Spirit. It will pray for its ordained and lay ministers to be freshly and powerfully anointed, so that their leadership and ministry will manifest the presence and power of Christ.

### **Structure**

The Catholic preference for top-down, centralized structures speaks of the need for spiritual oversight, and submission to the authority God has placed over the church. The Protestant preference for bottom-up (lay-initiated and lay-led) and diversified (shared power) structures insists that the congregation be trusted with real responsibility, and be given a sense of ownership for the life and mission of the church. The Pentecostal preference for spontaneity speaks of a burning desire for life—and a recognition that structures in themselves cannot bear fruit. These three, apparently incompatible approaches are mutually consistent. Each needs the others. The first, by itself, leads to authoritarianism; the second to anarchy; and the third to chaos. Holding them in dynamic balance is difficult and demanding—but results in life and blessing if done successfully.

### **Theological Emphasis**

The Charismatic Renewal succeeded in bringing back the forgotten Holy Spirit into the Church. Three-Stream churches will make generous room for the Holy Spirit. They will welcome the manifestation of all the spiritual gifts. They will value intuitive ways of knowing Truth, not only rational and cognitive ways. But they will never divorce the Spirit from the Word, elevating manifestations of the Spirit above disciplined Bible study, biblical preaching, and rationality. (The Word must in fact judge manifestations of the Spirit.) Neither will a three-stream church create false dichotomies between spontaneity and freedom on the one hand, and program and structure on the other. Finally, they will not divorce the Spirit and the Word from the Father, who creates order by keeping Word and Spirit in dynamic tension.

### **Key Aspect of Christ's Salvation**

A “three-streams” church will receive and love Jesus Christ as the scriptures reveal him to us—through his incarnation, sacrificial death, triumphant resurrection, and glorious ascension; through the gift of the Spirit at Pentecost; and through his promised return. It will never prefer his divinity over his humanity, or his miracles to his command to love and serve others.

# Appendix ii

## “The Three Critical Streams”

Adapted from an article by Fr. Robert J. Sanders, Ph.D, March, 2006

Anglicanism is diversified in the expression of the Faith -- evangelical, catholic, and charismatic -- as three streams flowing as one river in Jesus Christ. In the following, I will briefly describe the strengths and weaknesses of each of these three aspects of Christian faith. Further, I would claim that all must be present in each individual congregation if we are to have a robust Anglicanism in North America.

The great strength of Evangelicalism is its proclamation of the gospel as revealed in Scripture. That is first. The apostles were not sent forth to preach the catholic tradition, nor did they preach the Holy Spirit before Christ. They preached Jesus Christ as Lord, risen from the dead, the only way to the Father. The Spirit empowered them to do this and their preaching formed the church. Although the charismatic gifts of the Spirit and the great catholic tradition followed and enabled the preaching of the gospel, they were not the primary content of the gospel proclamation. For this reason, the evangelical commitment to Scripture and the gospel is essential and primary.

The charismatic tradition recognizes that the preaching of the gospel must be accompanied by the supernatural work of the Spirit. Scripture is very clear on this. To glorify Christ, the Spirit illuminates Scripture, empowers worship, heals the sick, sanctifies the unholy, directs and guides believers, and delivers God's people from the power of evil spirits. All of this is characteristic of charismatic churches.

The great catholic tradition preserves and applies the faith originally given in Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. It does so through the Creeds, the great liturgies which set forth the glory of God, the lives of the saints who instruct in holiness, the right teaching of the theological tradition, the establishment of right order in the orders of ministry and canon law, and the Christian social tradition that developed as the Church Christianized the ancient western world. All this is important if the faith is to be preserved against false teaching, cultural accommodation, internal disorder, and social and economic irrelevance.

What happens if one of the three streams is exaggerated and the others ignored? Let me begin with Evangelicalism. Without a living experience of the Spirit, evangelicals tend to preach right doctrine rather than a living Christ. Ignoring the supernatural, they do not heal the broken hearted, the physically sick, and the spiritually oppressed. Further, knowing only the biblical Word and not the Sacrament, evangelicals neglect the glory of God found in the Eucharist. Lacking an awareness of the spiritual writings of the saints, they really do not know how to guide people into a deeper holiness. Politically, they focus on a narrow set of issues, important to be sure, such things as abortion, prayer in school, marriage and the family. They ignore the great catholic tradition of a just war and they rarely investigate the teaching of Scripture and the universal church on the vital subject of economics. As a result, evangelicalism has been weakened in its power to present the full gospel of Jesus Christ.

At their worst, charismatics end up with the same heresy as the liberals, the belief in private revelations that go beyond the teaching of Scripture. They would benefit from a catholic understanding of the Creeds which relates the Spirit to the Word. They also tend to go from experience to experience, or from church to church, looking to "be fed." Unaware of the catholic spiritual tradition, they do not know that God does not always grant intense experiences, and further, God sometimes secretly feeds the faithful soul even when it doesn't feel "fed." Many of them do not know the stability that can come from the regular attendance at Eucharist, nor do they practice the disciplines of the church year. This leaves them at the mercy of their own inclinations or the latest spiritual fad. Like many evangelicals they focus on a narrow range of social issues and lack the theological tools by which to take a critical stance toward the culture. As a result, they exhaust themselves with spiritual excess or burn out when God does not meet their expectations.

Anglo-Catholics understand the glory of the Eucharist and the great tradition. At times, however, they fuss over the minutiae of ritual while neglecting the power of the gospel to save. Even worse, when liturgy descends into preciousness, the glory of God is obscured by blind adherence to external form. When combined with liberal theology, Anglo-catholic piety can give the appearance of holiness even as they advance a revisionist agenda. They know the Creeds, the lives of the saints, the riches of the tradition, yet they do not obey this tradition by standing for orthodoxy and taking the gospel to the streets. Like the charismatics and evangelicals, they do carry out acts of mercy, but again, like them, issues of justice often take a back seat.

Every congregation needs to include all three streams. This claim is the central affirmation of this essay. Why do I say this? In general, many people come to faith, or have their childhood faith re-awakened, by an evangelical or charismatic encounter with God. They grow in that faith through obedience, worship, fellowship, study, prayer, and service. Without healing and deliverance, however, this process can be blocked or degenerate into external form without internal substance. If they persist in their walk with Christ, they would be blessed to encounter the great catholic tradition by entering the stability of the church year, the Eucharist, and the catholic understanding of the spiritual life and discipline. Any church that does not offer all three streams will not attract members in the first place, or if attracted, will not keep them or enable them to grow in grace.

What we need is leadership committed to the evangelical, charismatic, and catholic substance of the faith. Too many Christian leaders do not venture forth to examine, study, and experience what their fellow Christians proclaim as living realities. Evangelicals avoid charismatic meetings and the laying on of hands for deliverance. Charismatics do not study the writings of the Church fathers, nor do they see how their experience is connected to Eucharist and the Creeds. Anglo-Catholics do not let themselves be challenged by the evangelical emphasis on saving souls and many are not serious about healing or deliverance. As a result, many congregations are half-starved. Once Christian leaders boldly receive the fullness of God's saving grace, they will be in a position to lead their flocks into the fullness of God's love. It is a challenge and we need to meet it.

# Sources

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